

# Cortés's objects and the idea of New Spain

## Inventories as spatial narratives

Alessandra Russo

*From the very first month of his arrival on the Mexican coast, and throughout the remainder of his life, the conquistador Hernán Cortés sent (and on occasion brought personally) to the Iberian peninsula – but also to Rome, the Moluccas, Lima and Algiers – hundreds of objects, many of which he presented as gifts received from local chiefs. These Cortés offered to the monarch and to a variety of Spanish dignitaries, as well as to the pope. The language employed in describing and in inventorying the objects suggests nonetheless, that some of them may have been made after the arrival of the Spaniards. In his letters, Cortés himself declares that he had been not only the patron but also the designer responsible for some hundreds of these items, perhaps with the aim of multiplying tangible proofs of the very 'object' he was in the process of creating – New Spain. At a time when there was still no map to represent the outlines of this territory, his project was given concrete form by these 'treasures' and was enhanced by the language used to describe them. These objects and their respective descriptions also serve to remind us of the rapidity with which local artists came to reappropriate and to transform the things brought from Europe by the conquistadors, challenging the ways in which this material should be displayed in museums today.*

The gifts Cortés has received from Mutezuma are so marvellous, both for their intrinsic value and for their workmanship, that it is better not to describe them until we see them. In company with Your Beatitude, we have examined in the famous city of Valladolid the first ones sent over, and we have described them in our Fourth Decade . . . Cortés writes that within a few days he will send a number of presents, but that the first to reach us are much inferior in number, quality and value.

Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *Fifth decade* (1523), book III.

That ship brings the treasure which is composed of a part of what Cortés amassed, at the cost of risks and dangers.

Anghiera, *Fifth decade* (1523), book X.

Since the French pirate, Florin, captured the fleet carrying the valuable presents sent to the Emperor by Cortés and his companions in the conquest, the latter has sent no other letter either to the Emperor or to our Council, so great was his chagrin and so overcome was he by sorrow at this important loss.

Anghiera, *Eighth Decade* (1525), book VI.<sup>1</sup>

IN these passages from the *Decades* of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera (1457–1526), the Italian chronicler at the Spanish court records almost in real time the air of suspense caused in Spain by the whereabouts of three

shipments sent by Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) from the New World: the first, carrying the 'presents' obtained from Moctezuma in Tenochtitlan; the second, the treasures looted during the war of conquest; and the third, the magnificent gifts sent to Charles V but stolen by the pirate Florin.<sup>2</sup> Anghiera also explained how the Conquistador masterfully created such suspense by sending ahead of or along with the objects, written documents – letters and instructions – and oral information that made the objects function as proof: they were concretizations of the richness of the territory as well as of his actions overseas. The evidentiary task given to the objects was so strong that even without physically observing the items – not yet arrived or already captured – the readers of the descriptions could 'see' on paper what was happening an ocean away. The inventories listing each of the objects also work to create a subtle interplay between distance and suspense. They express media, shapes, quantities and sometimes even weight, and yet they create narratives that can be read independently from the observation of the items themselves. Even today, when the objects in question do not survive, the lists have the capacity to thrill, as if they were capable of materializing the items before the reader's eyes. How does this demonstrative quality of an inventory work?

### Travelled objects, vertiginous lists

Over the past century, scholarship on early modern collections has devoted special attention to the category of *mirabilia* in order to study the way in which objects gathered during the process of European expansion – mainly by the Portuguese and Spanish crowns – were received, recorded and displayed.<sup>3</sup> Several major contributions have analysed the diverse roles played out by items in collections, the heterogeneous relationships of collectors to objects,<sup>4</sup> and the various ways in which they ‘functioned’ not only as inert ornaments but as creators of a new vision of the world, often in a close and ‘scenographic’ relationship with natural specimens and antiquities.<sup>5</sup> Crucial to these contributions have been the concepts of ‘wonder’ and ‘inquiry’ as concretizations of a new desire for knowledge under the dual need to fit novelty into the familiar and to reorganize the familiar through the novelty of the unknown.

If this attention to the reception and consumption of goods has disclosed crucial aspects of European thought (in its internal variety) and life,<sup>6</sup> less interest has been paid to the analysis of the very language of the inventories. Considered repetitive, ambiguous and boring,<sup>7</sup> the enumerative character of the lists – apparently impermeable to any deeper analysis – has often been reduced to a kind of language of treasure maps, ‘decipherable’ only with the aim of rescuing the objects so puzzlingly pinpointed in the sources.<sup>8</sup>

In this article, I shall not address the inventories in order to match any given entry to an actual item; rather, my intention is to address the textual presence of the objects in these sources, and the unexpected implications of their lively yet precise descriptions. I will approach this specific genre, the inventory, not only as a ‘list’ of objects to be shipped, received, displayed or inherited, but also as a type of narrative that made visible *physical* spaces whose geographical reality, in the early sixteenth century, was difficult to grasp. In fact, beyond their apparently fragmented nature, their vertiginous character<sup>9</sup> and the mere dynamic of the circulation of goods that they record, the textual presence of the items allows for consideration of inventories as spatial narratives. Both through the materiality of the objects listed and through the language invented to describe them, but also through the precision of the localities from where and to where the items would travel, inventories will be approached

here as capable of ‘mapping’ territories in a mirror effect: the destination and the origin of the shipments constitute in this sense parallel ‘objects’ of these lists, and the items sent and received flesh out and embody these broader geographical entities.

In approaching inventories as spatial narratives, it is first necessary to distinguish different types of inventories. There are those that address the ‘*état des lieux*’ of a collection, written to record its present condition, which stress both its spatial arrangement – for instance, giving indications of the place where particular objects were presented within the collection (with details such as ‘in the first room’, ‘in the kitchen’) – and indications of ownership or responsibility over it (through the repetition of expressions such as ‘belonging to,’ or ‘being in charge of’). A different category of inventory is that listing objects to be sent, to be offered, or having been received. I would put in this last category inventories as diverse as those prepared to accompany the shipment of items, but also those listing the composition of a dowry or of a will. The objects recorded in these lists are characterized by mobility: they will travel or pass from one space/owner to another, intertwining specific relationships between the sender/giver, the objects, and the recipients. Their language is in this sense a language of motion, with an emphasis on words that express a transfer of their content – for instance through verbs such as ‘send’, ‘give’, ‘receive’, ‘bring’, ‘take’, ‘leave’, and ‘offer’. Yet, elements of stability can also be found within these inventories: for instance when they specify the way in which items should be displayed once they have arrived at their destination. On the other hand, elements of mobility can be present in inventories recording collections that, while pertaining to a unique owner, need to travel from one place to another in order to follow their possessors.<sup>10</sup>

In the following pages several inventories written in the sixteenth century and mainly characterized by mobility are discussed. Firstly, the list of the objects sent from the Mexican coast to Prince Charles (1500–1558; he became Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1519) and his mother Queen Juana (1479–1555) by the conquistador Hernán Cortés and the recently created Council of the Rica Villa de Veracruz in July 1519. Secondly, some aspects of the inventory enumerating the objects *supposedly* given to Cortés by Moctezuma on the Spaniards’ arrival in Mexico a few months earlier – and also sent by Cortés to Charles – will be analysed. Two

different descriptions of these gifts will be examined, in Spanish and Náhuatl respectively, as contained in Book 12 of the *General History of the Things of New Spain* (henceforth referred to as *Florentine Codex*), produced under the supervision of the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún (1499–1590) in the 1570s.<sup>11</sup> The third inventory that will be analysed is that of objects sent in May 1522, also by Cortés, but from Tenochtitlan after the final victory over the Mexica (13 August 1521) and addressed to several people and places in the Iberian peninsula. Some later inventories dating respectively to 1524, 1526 and 1529, will also be examined; these record objects produced under Cortés's patronage and design. Finally, some reflections will be offered on the objects found in 1548 in the Conquistador's houses in Seville (Spain) and in Cuernavaca (New Spain) after his death.

While analysing the inventories written in New Spain, I will examine other authors that counter-balance the information coming from overseas with their own direct observation of the objects, such as Pietro Martire d'Anghiera and Francisco López de Gómara (c.1511–c.1566). My central interest, however, is not to reassemble these already well-studied reactions, but to read them in relationship to the political nature of the very shipments sent by Cortés, which is why it is necessary to return to the documents *accompanying* the gifts. The language of these sources will be examined in order to study how they 'seal' crucial political episodes of the history of both Spain and New Spain. The inventory of 1522 is particularly rich in this sense: the material contents of that shipment, and the variety and precision of the high functionaries and key places to which the gifts are sent, will form the focus of my analysis. These inventories and their objects helped to craft what can be called the very 'idea'<sup>12</sup> of New Spain: as presents and war trophies, they constitute the 'tutelary signs' which in effect gave birth to a new political territory yet presented in close interdependence with the Iberian peninsula. In this sense, Cortés's discourse on and through these objects and their associated lists is crucial for understanding how they were able to materialize the essence of his project of conquest and colonization.

The Spanish and Náhuatl enumeration of the gifts apparently offered to the Conquistador by Moctezuma and recorded in the *Florentine Codex* allow for a broader discussion of the mutual interference between different histories of the conquest, and in particular of the 'mythology' built upon Moctezuma's

offerings to Cortés. It is very probable that the Conquistador utilized certain aspects of (and to some extent forged) this episode, with the aim of constructing a convincing demonstration of the project of conquest conceived as a *translatio imperii* between the Mexica *tlatoani*, Cortés himself, and the Emperor.<sup>13</sup> The *Florentine Codex* – even if often labelled the 'vision of the vanquished' of the conquest – is in fact closely linked to documents published previously, such as Cortés's letters, or López de Gómara's *Historia General de las Indias* (1552). The *Florentine Codex*'s episode of the gifts offered by Moctezuma to the Conquistador was very likely already influenced by these Spanish sources. Yet, the *Florentine Codex* encourages further considerations on the possible reappropriation of these discourses, several decades after the conquest. The relationship between the language in which the objects are described both in Spanish and in Náhuatl and the materiality of the objects 'translated' in these narratives provide important clues for analysis.

Finally, my attention to the language of the lists, seeks to open up a broader art historical question: how should we refer to the items that were sent from the Mexican coast to the Old World, as early as 1519, the very year of Cortés's arrival? Are the opposite and yet complementary categories of 'Pre-Hispanic' (or Pre-Columbian) and 'colonial' pertinent in descriptions of the creations shipped by Cortés? The proposed answer to this question places the study of the inventories in direct relationship to the way in which these objects are presented today in museums and exhibitions.

### **From *rescates* to *presentes***

On 6 July 1519, that is, some months after his arrival on the Mexican coast, Cortés and the recently created municipal council of the Rica Villa de Veracruz compiled a list of about 180 precious objects to be sent to Queen Juana and to her son Charles. Alonso Fernández de Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo were in charge of bringing the shipment as 'procurators' of the new founded town. They signed the document on 10 July. This inventory, referred to as a '*memorial*' is in fact an integral part of the letter known today as the *Carta de Cabildo*, where the history of the landing, the tensions and the alliances with the local populations and the founding of the first municipality – the Cabildo de Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz – are described in detail.<sup>14</sup> In particular, the letter made clear the

discontinuity of Cortés's expedition with that of a year earlier, undertaken by Juan de Grijalba.<sup>15</sup> The Governor of Cuba, Diego de Velázquez, had sent Cortés 'to do what Grijalba had not done', in other words to 'salvage' (*rescatar*) more than his predecessor. It might be more appropriate to translate *rescatar* as 'to recover', since the idea was to recoup what had been invested in the expedition by bartering objects in an openly unequal exchange.<sup>16</sup> But the *Carta de Cabildo* aims also to perform the discontinuity between Cortés's expedition and Velázquez's plan. If we follow the text, in fact, an interesting major change takes place: the primary narrative role of the 'rescates' is taken over from this point forward by the *presents* offered by Cortés and to Cortés, offerings that enabled the Conquistador to create a powerful web of alliances with local chiefs. This major discursive change would

be stressed later by Cortés's chaplain and secretary López de Gómara when, in his *Historia General de las Indias* (1552), he made a radical distinction in the titles of the inventories of objects exchanged and brought back by Grijalba ('*El rescate que uvo Juan de Grijalba*', Fig. 1), and those sent by Cortés as gifts ('*El presente que Cortés envio al Emperador por su quinto*', Fig. 3). Between these two episodes, López de Gómara also masterfully placed the offering of presents of Moctezuma to Cortés ('*El presente y respuesta que Muteccuma embio a Cortés*', Fig. 2)

These transfers of things must have been perceived as highly symbolic and powerful, as an image from the *Florentine Codex* suggests (Fig. 4). López de Gómara's text points out clearly, for instance, that on several

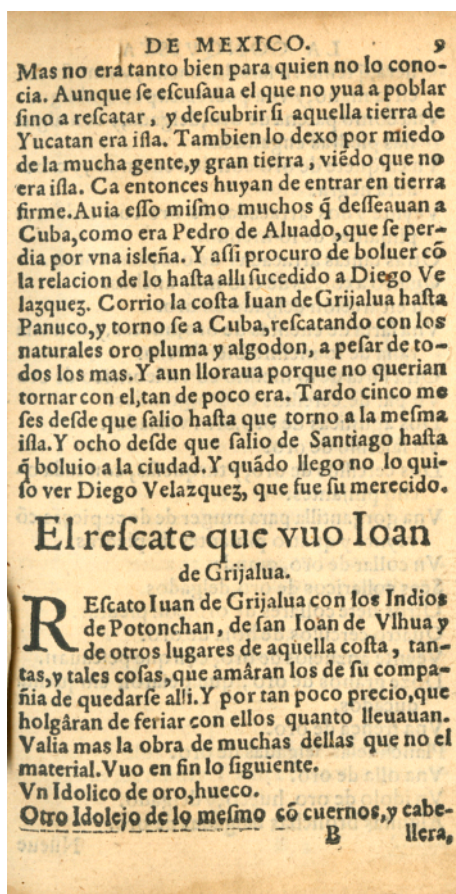


Fig. 1. Page from the inventory of the objects traded by Joan de Grijalba (*rescate*). Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de México con el descubrimiento de la Nueva España* (Antwerp, 1554), fol. 9. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.

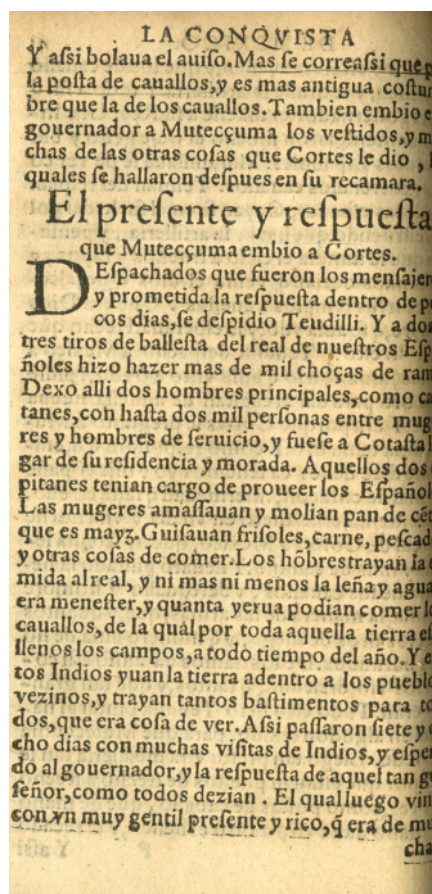


Fig. 2. Page describing the gift offered by Moctezuma to Cortés and his response (*el presente y respuesta*). Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de México con el descubrimiento de la Nueva España* (Antwerp, 1554), fol. 41v. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.

occasions, Cortés's presents to the *caciques* involved dressing them in Castilian clothes, and once the Conquistador even offers several items from his own wardrobe.<sup>17</sup> The *caciques* also begin to offer presents to Cortés. A crucial passage relates directly to these gifts listed later in the inventory and sent along with the letter: 'On the following day he [the *cacique*] returned as promised, and had a white cloth spread before the captain, and offered him certain precious gold ornaments which he placed on it; of all these objects and of others which were later obtained we make a special report to Your Majesties in a list which our representatives bear with them.'<sup>18</sup> The *Carta* describes in the following paragraph how it was that precisely that inaugural offering provided the basis for transforming the essential meaning of the exped-

ition and ignoring Velázquez's orders. Those gifts had demonstrated both the richness of the land and the welcoming attitudes of the local chiefs. From '*rescatar*', Cortés and his men decided to '*poblar*', that is to say to settle down, in order to expand (*acrescentar*) the sovereignty of Queen Juana and her son Charles.<sup>19</sup> The objects later described in the accompanying inventory (*Memorial*) are thus presented as a '*muestra*', both a sample and a demonstration of what has been described in the letter. They are a display of the richness already found and of the welcoming reception extended by the *caciques*, but they are also a sample of what may remain to be discovered and sent in the future.

The *Carta de Cabildo* offers then a description of the land, of its people, and of a number of details concerning local ceremonies<sup>20</sup> that correspond with the objects to be found in the *Memorial*. The last episode related in the letter is the founding of the council of the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, and the text emphasizes the disengagement of this expedition from Velázquez's instructions (which were, above all, to undertake an exploratory expedition on the qualities of the land, its richness, inhabitants, customs, etc.), formally asking for recognition of Cortés's leadership in the new project of conquest and pacification of the land, as well as in the governance of the Spaniards involved in this new mission.

Where the letter ends, the inventory begins as a continuation, forming textual evidence relating to all of the above-mentioned actions. The very first word of the list – 'And' – demonstrates the close interdependence between the *Carta* and the *Memorial*: 'And the gold, silver, jewels, shields and garments which we are sending to Your Royal Highnesses with the procurators, over and above the Fifth which belongs to Your Majesty, Fernando Cortés and this Council offer in your service.'<sup>21</sup> The opening paragraph of the inventory also provides some precious information on the legal status of the objects contained in the shipment. Cortés and the Council make clear that in addition to the Royal Fifth (*demás del quinto*) – that belongs to the Crown – they offer (*hacen servicio*) the 'gold, silver, jewels, shields and clothes' that follow. This 'excess' of value from the Royal Fifth is decisive in understanding the meaning of the first of Cortés's shipments. On 5 February 1504 Spain had decreed that one-fifth of the metals mined or *rescatados* had to be paid as a tax to the Spanish king.<sup>22</sup> Now, the *Memorial* makes it clear that only the first

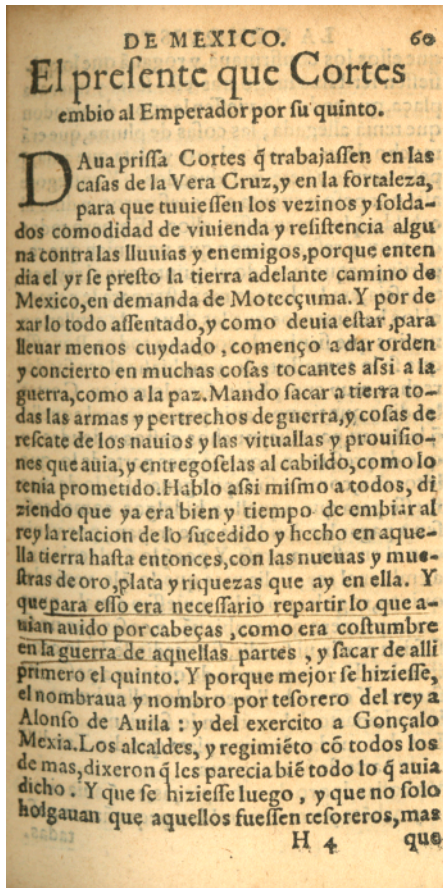


Fig. 3. Page describing of the presents offered by Moctezuma to Charles V (*el presente*). Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de México con el descubrimiento de la Nueva España* (Antwerp, 1554), fol. 60. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.



Fig. 4. An ambassador of Moctezuma offers a necklace to Cortés, on his arrival at the coast. The significance of the necklace is emphasized by its greatly enlarged scale: Cortés holds what may be the cloth in which it travelled, rendered at natural size. *Florentine Codex*, c.1570, book VIII, f. 13. Florence, Mediceo-Laurenziana Library, Med. Palat. 219, c.263r. Courtesy of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attirità Culturali.

object listed – the magnificent gold wheel – is sent to pay the Royal Fifth:

First a large gold wheel with a design of monsters on it and worked all over with foliage. This weighed 3,800 *pesos de oro*. From this wheel, because it was the best that has been found here and of the finest gold, the Fifth was taken for their Highnesses; this amounted to two thousand *castellanos* which belonged to them of their Fifth and Royal Privilege.<sup>23</sup>

After the gold wheel, the following items are presented as *exceeding* the quantity that belonged *de facto* to the Crown. The letter points this out, describing this shipment as ‘all the gold, silver and jewels that we have obtained in the land over and above the Fifth which belongs to your royal revenues by law.’<sup>24</sup> The Conquistador had also been absolutely firm on this point in the *Instruction* he had given to the two procurators, asking them to make clear to the functionaries of the House of Trade (Casa de Contratación) in Seville that, with the exception of the gold piece, all the remaining precious items were to be presented as gifts: ‘one thousand and eight hundred pesos, in addition to the wheel, because of all these things, only two thousand pesos belonged to your Highnesses for their

Fifth, on the ten thousand that we sent, as you know, and the necklaces, and shields and silver, and featherwork that belonged to the Council, this one offers all these things to their Royal Highnesses, and you need to talk this over with the people of the House of Trade of Seville’.<sup>25</sup>

Going beyond the *rescate* and exceeding the Royal Fifth, Cortés’s offerings sent from Veracruz to Queen Juana and Prince Charles demonstrate the potentialities of a new political space that is metonymically and metaphorically represented through them and their lists. These objects form part of a territory that belongs to the Crown and yet the objects exceeding the Royal Fifth are *offered* by Cortés to the Crown. Half a century later, Diego Muñoz Camargo’s *Descripción de la ciudad y provincia de Tlaxcala* would be able to represent the force of this discursive strategy as a visual allegory (Fig. 5) that, while being based on European allegorical models of ‘national’ representations, is nonetheless solidly anchored in the Conquistador’s actions and textual production. Here, the Conquistador is *offering* New Spain to the now Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, as if it was a gathering of personal properties.<sup>26</sup>



Fig. 5. Cortés offers New Spain (*Cortesius ofrece la Nueva España*) and Pizarro offers Peru (*Pizarus ofrece el Perú*) to Charles V, from Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Descripción de la ciudad y provincia de Tlaxcala* (c. 1584). By permission of University of Glasgow Library, Department of Special Collections, MS Hunter 242 (U.3.15).

### Proof of a new distance

Montejo and Puertocarrero sailed with Cortés's letter, the inventory, the Royal Fifth and the gifts on 16 July 1519. Contrary to instructions, they put into port at Cuba at the end of August, where some of the items from the shipment were probably shown secretly to certain Spaniards close to Velázquez.<sup>27</sup> But the first royal gift (*regio presente*) arrived apparently intact, in Sanlúcar, in early October.<sup>28</sup> It then travelled to Seville where it was completely unpacked, observed among others by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478–1557), and recorded in the Casa de Contratación on 5 November in a new inventory entitled *Lo que envió de la Nueva España el Capitán Hernando Cortés* (What Captain Hernando Cortés sent

from the New Spain).<sup>29</sup> Pietro Martire wrote that Charles had been informed of the treasure by a duplicate copy of the *Memorial*, and much anticipated the content of the shipment. Packed up again, the items were then sent on 7 February 1520 through the *guarda-joyas* Luís Veret to the Emperor, who was visiting his mother in the palace of Tordesillas. Five Totonac Indians wearing some of the items accompanied the goods,<sup>30</sup> which were received in Valladolid at the beginning of March,<sup>31</sup> to be then unpacked again, displayed and admired by, among others, Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, Bartolomé de las Casas and Giovanni Ruffo da Forlì. The latter informs us that after having received the objects, the Totonac were (undressed and) redressed in Castilian clothes.<sup>32</sup> From Valladolid, Charles then set out, via La Coruña, for Flanders. The objects – once again packed and unpacked – were presented during the summer in Brussels, where Albrecht Dürer had the opportunity to see them between 26 August and 3 September 1520, and immediately described his revelatory visit to the palace in his diary.<sup>33</sup> It is very probable that a 'catalogue' of the pieces – in fact a transcription of the *Memorial* and maybe even of the *Carta of Cabildo*, may have helped to reconstitute the treasure's original form in Brussels, since the five Indians were already back in Seville on 22 March. It is also tempting to imagine that in the absence of the Totonacs, it was the audience that tried on the items.

Along with the list of the objects sent from Veracruz by the Council, and that of the pieces received in Seville by the Casa de Contratación – which remained unpublished until the nineteenth century – there exist other versions of the inventory. López de Gómara enumerated the objects in his *Historia General de las Indias* (1552), Bernal Díaz del Castillo in the *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España* (written in 1568, but published only in 1632) and Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas in the *Historia General de los hechos de los Castellanos* (1601–14).<sup>34</sup> A variety of other fortunate observers from Pietro Martire d'Anghiera to Oviedo – and including not only Dürer, but Bartolomé de las Casas, the Venetian Ambassador Gasparo Contarini or the already mentioned Archbishop of Cosenza, Giovanni Ruffo da Forlì – described the objects and recorded some interesting details of their presentation. In the letter written by the latter to Francesco Chierigato, for instance, the Indians

accompanying the treasure in Valladolid play a major role in the transfer of the presents: they are referred to as those who ‘brought’ the objects and explained their significance.<sup>35</sup> One wonders whether the Totonacs may even have performed some ceremonies in front of the pieces. Whatever the case, this note clearly indicates that the objects did not always ‘arrive in Europe completely divorced from their context’, as it is too often assumed.<sup>36</sup>

But it is necessary to return to the inventory itself. The multiple rewritings of this list demonstrate how Cortés’s offering forms a crucial episode of the conquest as a myth of foundation. It was at this specific moment when, from the other side of the world, Cortés sent physical proof of its remoteness, that the distance itself was made visible and the reality of another world became a matter of fact. The regal gift was composed of ‘gold, silver, jewels, shields, and clothes’ (*el oro y plata y joyas y rodela y ropa*), and the inventory specifies clearly that in addition to the gold pieces, the gift included ‘necklaces, shields, silver and feather objects’ (*collares, y rodela, y plata, y plumajes*).<sup>37</sup> Cortés seems to have been particularly attentive to the fact that the objects should be described in detail<sup>38</sup> and these precise descriptions invite further consideration.

Even if the inventory begins with the sumptuous gold piece that corresponds to the ‘quinto’, there is no hierarchical ordering in the succession of the objects, which ‘parade’ through the text in the same order in which they had been stored in the boxes. ‘Gold, jewels, stones and feathers’ constitute together a major category of luxury, which assembles and mixes different materials, different values in an inaugural regal gift supposed to represent the richness and the novelty of the land ‘discovered’. The real novelty of this first regal gift, however, is the fact that the European taxonomy for precious materials such as gold, silver and precious stones, is enriched by a new, paradigmatic, term: *pluma/plumaje*, the feather items, which appear about fifty times in the list, associated with almost every kind of object. Practically each item sent from the coast of Veracruz in July 1519 to Spain, is identified with the ‘feather sign’, the very material that demonstrates that these objects came from the American continent. In fact, this symbolic aspect of feather materials, which explains the conspicuous occurrence of the terms *pluma/plumajes* (feather/featherworks) in the inventory, plays the double role

of relating this expedition to the previous voyages that had already transformed this material into the proof and synonym of a new territory. One may cite, for instance, the famous details of the *Miller Atlas* (1519) in which the territory of Brazil is covered with birds and people dressed in feather costumes, but also with the description of featherworks in the pages of Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci that both Cortés and his audience must have read. These objects are then demonstrations that this territory is part of that same *Mundus Novus*, and at the same time they exemplify the autonomy of Cortés’s expedition. As we have seen, he had made it clear that these items did not correspond to the Royal Fifth: in material terms, indeed, they exceeded it, since the *quinto real* was applicable only to mineral materials. Aerial and yet tangible, these feather objects represent, so to speak, the real ‘wings’ of his project. Along with the Totonacs sent to the Crown, they demonstrate the concreteness of a new *political* and in some sense an autonomous territory.

Another performative aspect of the recomposition of the shipment needs to be stressed here. Being stored in several boxes, elements that belonged to one object were often separated due to the contingencies of travel: different parts of the same item might even appear in different trunks. Before crossing the Atlantic, several objects were taken apart to be reassembled once they arrived: ‘two featherworks that are for two stone helmets listed later’; ‘a mitre of blue stones with a figure of monsters . . . the featherworks mentioned above belong to this mitre’.<sup>39</sup> In these quotations, we also notice how the inventory employs words such as ‘*capacete*’ (helmet) or ‘*mitra*’ (mitre): this characteristic is recurrent throughout the list, which makes use of a notably varied vocabulary borrowed from Peninsular ecclesiastical, military and popular terminology, as well as that of the Islamic world already integrated into Spanish custom. When one reads in the list items such as *antipara, mitra, patena, guadamecil, cetro, sayo, haba, poma, zapatones, guarique*, does this mean that the novelty of the Mexican things is reduced to a current taxonomy?<sup>40</sup> We know how analogy guided the understanding of the New World – Cortés’s obsession with seeing ‘mosques’ everywhere, or ‘moorish’ (*amoriscados*) characteristics in the architecture is probably the best example of this mechanism<sup>41</sup> – but here it could carry different implications.



### Moorish brass bells, *guadamecíes* of the Indians, Huitzilopochtli cups

The mixed vocabulary employed to record the items sent from Veracruz is also found in other versions of the list. Mitres, crowns, patens, sceptres and cassocks transcend Cortés's inventory of 1519 and appear in texts read by larger audiences. In his *Fourth Decade*, for instance, Pietro Martire d'Anghiera assures his readers that 'there are tiaras and mitres, spangled with stones chiefly resembling sapphires'.<sup>42</sup> It is difficult today to understand this language of objects that only superficially corresponds to the imposition of modern Western terminology.<sup>43</sup> It is worth approaching these somewhat odd terms as part of a new language (though, sometimes, composed of ancient words), progressively created to translate the singularity of thousands of new objects through visual references that the public would immediately have comprehended.

Other instances of these 'hybrid' descriptions, however, appear even more complex. For example, a shield 'of wood and leather, with little bells of Moorish brass all around', as described by López de Gómara, employs the adjective 'Moorish' not to point to any stylistic feature, but to describe its medium that was seemingly distinguished, in Spain, from the brass more generally used.<sup>44</sup> Is it even possible that the gifts

offered to Cortés had been compiled as early as the late spring of 1519 with materials brought by the conquistadors themselves such as the bells frequently used as rescates (Fig. 6)? On the other hand, the production of copper bells in Mesoamerica was also well known<sup>45</sup> and the 'little bells of Moorish brass' could simply have been the writer's turn of phrase. But, how would the readers have understood these passages, since the *moriscos* were Muslims converted to Christianity? We sometimes forget that López de Gómara had gathered the information later used in the *Historia* both while he accompanied Cortés at the Battle of Algiers (1541) and afterwards.<sup>46</sup> Was that more recent experience – the failed attempt to conquer and convert a part of the Ottoman empire – influencing the narration of the conquest of Mexico and its numerous references to 'Moorish' objects and materials?

Another item in López de Gómara's inventory captures our attention: the 'cup made of a gold plate, and carved in it Uitzilopochtli, god of battles.'<sup>47</sup> Here, an object called a 'cup', made with a local material, gold, represents Huitzilopochtli, 'god of battles'. In this case, paradoxically, what is the most suspect in the description of this piece is the Mexica divinity carved in it: the cup, in fact, portrays a sacred entity very rarely figured in the Pre-Hispanic times, except in ephemeral,



Fig. 6. Brass and bronze bells (*cascabeles de latón y bronce*), diameter c. 1.8–1.5cm. These bells, found in Santo Domingo, were part of the objects 'rescatados' with the Taino by the Conquistadors, including Cortés, who lived on the island of Hispaniola between 1504 and 1511. Museo de las Casas Reales, Santo Domingo. Photograph, Alessandra Russo. Courtesy of the Ministerio de Cultura de Santo Domingo.

and more precisely in edible materials.<sup>48</sup> Illustrations of Huitzilopochtli are abundant in manuscripts painted soon after the conquest and, later, in other sources created in Europe, such as the famous prints included in Diego Valadés's *Rhetorica Christiana* (1579) or in Arnoldus Montanus's *De Nieuwe en Onbekende Weereld* (1691).<sup>49</sup> How, then, are we to understand López de Gómara's reference? Was that cup one of the rare Pre-Hispanic objects made of gold representing Huitzilopochtli? Or can we hypothesize that the development of a stable iconography for the 'warrior god' occurred precisely with the arrival of the Spaniards, in a situation of conflict, and that the aforementioned cup was one of the first examples of this process? Or, is López de Gómara simply misidentifying the figure, perhaps already writing, in 1552, under the influence of early post-conquest pictorial representations of the Mexica pantheon and fomenting in his turn the later graphic interpretations of this divinity? Or, perhaps Cortés himself provided this flawed information to his chaplain, several decades after the conquest. It is difficult to know. Nonetheless, these questions help us to understand the multiplicity of possible relationships between the textual presence of an object in a written source and its very nature.

Caution is even more necessary today in judging the descriptions of objects as evident forms of textual 'westernization', because while analogies guided some of these descriptions, the authors seem to recognize various types of similitude. When they find it necessary, they openly nuance their affirmations, using the expressions 'resembling', 'sort of' or 'like'. The same López de Gómara points without hesitation to the 'Moorish brass' used in the small bells of the above quotation, while in other places his text carefully specifies 'a cloth, sort of cape' (*'una manta, especie de capa'*), 'small stones, like rubies' (*'pedruzuelas, como rubies'*), 'a staff, like a royal sceptre' (*'una vara, como cetro real'*), 'shoes like esparteñas' (*'zapatos, como esparteñas'*).<sup>50</sup> The comparative analysis is also nuanced in the writings of Giovanni da Forlì who, while referring to a shield sent from Veracruz as an '*adarga*' and 'not dissimilar to those of Spain', acknowledges its difference in terms of size and media.<sup>51</sup>

The analysis of the language of the objects in the written sources is, then, far from simple. Moreover, the vocabulary employed could also point to a specific artistic phenomenon, namely the rapidity with which local artists took to reproducing European objects.

This is well attested to in the sources. One of the items listed in the inventory written in Veracruz, a '*guadamecí*' – a Hispano-Arabic word coming from the city of Gadames in Lybia and used to refer to a technique considered since the fifteenth century to be the most representative of Spanish art,<sup>52</sup> ornamented leather work<sup>53</sup> – appears, for instance, at the core of an anecdote told some years later by the Franciscan Motolonia. An Indian asked the monk for a *guadamecí* in order to obtain a model and to copy it, saying 'We are going to make *guadamecías* and to give them a golden and silvery colour like the masters of Castille'.<sup>54</sup> Already in Cortés's list of 1519, six *guadamecías* appear and even though the inventory specifies that they are 'those that Indians make here',<sup>55</sup> it is possible that just four months after Cortés's arrival, the ornamented leather brought from Spain might already have inspired the production of similar items by local workshops. We know for instance, that among the materials the Totonacs found most intriguing in Veracruz, López de Gómara says, were 'linen, wood, leather, glass, and iron . . . and they were amazed to see the Spaniards and all their things'.<sup>56</sup> In all probability, the decorated leatherwork – the *guadamecías* – was of particular interest.

It seems thus plausible that among the things sent by Cortés to Spain in 1519, there could have already been items that displayed techniques, materials, shapes and even evidence for the use of tools from the Old World. We know that the year before Cortés's arrival, Grijalba left in Potonchan, and in San Juan de Ulúa as part of the *rescate*, a series of implements (1,000 needles, 2,000 pins, six pairs of scissors, fifteen knives, a hammer, pincers etc.) and objects (six mirrors, six cotton shirts, five turbans and four glass medals, along with 2,000 glass beads, coloured capes, coats, a worn dress, several leather belts etc.),<sup>57</sup> that furthermore correspond exactly to the type of things gathered on Cortés's ships in Cuba, to reach the Mexican coast a year later.<sup>58</sup>

The *Florentine Codex* illustrates the speed with which these things arrived at the height of the Mexica domination. In an image in Book 12, the Mexica messengers, returning from Veracruz where they had met with Grijalba in 1518, present to Moctezuma three glass bead collars as *rescatados* with the Spaniards (Fig. 7); the *tlatonani*, sitting on his *icpalli* (the wicker seat of authority) remains apparently unmoved. In the following image from the *Codex*, the Mexica messengers of Moctezuma are shown offering, at some later time,



Fig. 7. Moctezuma receives the glass bead collars (*rescatados*) sent by Grijalba. *Florentine Codex*, c.1570, book 12, fol.5. Florence, Mediceo-Laurenziana Library, Med. Palat. 220, c.4125. Courtesy of the Ministero per i Beni e la Attività Culturali.

in 1519, a collar to Cortés that if not made with the same glass beads, suspiciously echoes the one presented to the *tlatoani* in the previous image (Fig. 8);<sup>59</sup> here the Conquistador, seated on his *silla de cadera* (armchair), puts his left hand to his chest as if both astounded and intimidated.<sup>60</sup>

Indian *guadamecies*, Huitzilopochtli cups, Moorish brass bells, mitres and crowns all form examples of the first *regio presente* – assemblages of things combining the old and the new. The complexity of these objects and their descriptions make it impossible to refer to their production as simply ‘indigenous’ or ‘Pre-Hispanic’. The regal gift inventoried in 1519 might be understood as a physical and theoretical container, in which values, terminologies and materials renew the category of ‘treasure’, now composed of gold and feather works, leather and stone pieces, ‘books of the Indians’ – that is Mesoamerican pictographic codices – to include also popular items such as a ‘*sayo de hombre de la tierra*’, ‘a tunic of a man of the land’, whose rarity promotes it to rank amongst the ‘precious things’. Nonetheless, here again, historical caution is necessary. Two *sayos* were also left on the coast by Grijalba the year before (‘*un sayo de frisa con su caperuza*’, ‘*un sayo de terciopelo verde traído, con una gorra nera de terciopelo*’), and several were also brought by Cortés who even offered a ‘silk tunic’ (‘*un sayo de seda*’) to the messengers of Moctezuma.<sup>61</sup> Could the clothing later offered to him in return and sent on to Spain also be a reinterpretation in local material of a garment seen after the arrival of the Spaniards? And, might Cortés very soon have been commissioning such pieces? In his second letter,



Fig. 8. Cortés receives Moctezuma’s present containing, among other things, (glass?) bead collars. *Florentine Codex*, c.1570, book 12, fol. 8v. Florence, Mediceo-Laurenziana Library, Med. Palat. 220, c.415v. Courtesy of the Ministero per i Beni e la Attività Culturali.

written in 1520, he was extremely clear in this regard, mentioning that as soon as he entered Tenochtitlan, Mexica craftsmen immediately started to produce a range of objects that he had himself sketched and designed and that Moctezuma ordered to be made (‘other things which I drew for him and which he had made in gold, such as images, crucifixes, medals, jewels, collars, and many other things of ours that I made them copy’). He also mentions items that he asked them to make specifically for the Royal Fifth

(‘marks which I had the natives make into plates, both large and small, and bowls and cups, and spoons, and they fashioned them as perfectly as we could explain them’).<sup>62</sup>

### The poetics of a counter-inventory

Up to now we have stressed the highly heterogeneous character of Cortés’s regal gifts – heterogeneity in terms of mixed materials, techniques, and monetary value, but also in terms of the vocabulary employed in different versions of the inventory. We have also noted the variety of knowledge necessary, once the objects had reached Seville, Valladolid or Brussels, to reassemble the pieces, since their different parts were occasionally stored, as we have seen, in separate boxes. But we have also proposed that – aside from the incontestable splendour of the items – the symbolic force of the regal gift resided specifically in its capacity to renew the category of preciousness. Pietro Martire d’Anghiera, noticed what one might call the ‘epistemological’ originality of the objects sent by Cortés, described as a man seduced once by ‘*auro, atque argento geminisque variis*’ (gold, and silver, and various precious stones), while the items received in Spain shone ‘*ex auro argentoque ac variarum volucrum pennis arte mira laboratis*’ (of gold, of silver, and of feathers of different birds artistically composed).<sup>63</sup> The addition of the feather items to the category of precious things is clearly emphasized in this passage.

Not only the richness, but also the innovative combination of these very materials afforded Cortés the ability to represent to the Crown the novelty of the land he had decided to settle (*poblar*). In this sense, the precious nature of the gift and its originality provided both a justification and a visible proof of what he had achieved. The idea of a new treasure became so central in the process of conquest that even Moctezuma is said to have referred to it in order to present his richness to the Spaniards. In a passage from López de Gómara that seems more part of a theatrical piece than of a chronicle, the *tlatoani* pronounces the following words to Cortés: ‘it is true that I have silver, gold, feathers, weapons and other jewels and precious objects in the treasure of my parents and grandfathers, kept from a long time ago to the present, as is the custom of the kings’.<sup>64</sup> Once again, the fact that this chronicle has been written *a posteriori* and with the strong influence of Cortés’s ‘voice’ explains why

the character of Moctezuma reappropriates the same discursive tools – the reference to a ‘treasure’ – used by the Conquistador to legitimize his power.

In order to form a contrast to these related aspects of the Spanish sources, could the Spanish and Náhuatl texts of the *Florentine Codex*, written in the 1570s, be expected to provide a different perspective on these objects? The descriptions of the gifts sent by Moctezuma to Cortés occupy Chapters 4 and 5 of Book 12. It is a characteristic of the entire *Codex* that the Náhuatl and Spanish texts do not coincide. This is particularly evident in the description of the articles brought by the messengers to the coast of Veracruz, said to have been the paraphernalia of Tlaloc, Quetzalcoatl, Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipoca. The columns in Náhuatl refer to them as *motenehua teutlatquiltl* (the paraphernalia of the divinities) and enumerate over thirty objects, including seven composed of feathers, while the Spanish text inventories eight feather items among twenty objects. The changing proportions that emerge from comparison of the two lists (7:30 ≠ 8:20) require some consideration. The first object offered to Cortés is described summarily in Náhuatl as *coaxayacatl xiuhlica tlachihualli*, ‘a mask in a form of a snake, made of turquoise’. On the other hand, the Spanish text of the *Florentine Codex*, specifies the composition of the mask in several lines.<sup>65</sup> By the profusion of specific types of details regarding the composition and the materials used, the Spanish version of the inventory more closely resembles that written in Veracruz: even if it stresses the beauty of the object, each item appears through its material and tangible components.

In a diametrically opposite case, a ‘mask of feathers’ listed hastily in the Spanish version is described in Náhuatl in such poetic terms that we could read the text in verse. Thanks to the use of a rhetoric closer to the oral tradition than to alphabetic writing, the rhythm of the description itself reveals another kind of ‘material’.

<i>Quetzal aztatzontli</i>	A headdress of quetzal and heron
<i>Çan mocaquetzalli</i>	made up by valuable feathers
<i>Motquítica quetzalli</i>	very valuable feathers
<i>Iuh xoxoquiui</i>	so that it becomes green
<i>Xoxoquiuhitimani</i>	so that it is becoming green

The alliterative qualities of *que*, *tz*, *mo*, *qui*, *ti*, and *ih* make the object visible through the combination, repetition and transformation of consonants and vowels. Through these sonorous characteristics, the ‘gift’

is provided with an auratic tool that accompanies its chromatic transformation: 'so that it becomes green, so that it is becoming green'. The ever-changing qualities of the objects offered to the Spaniards and in particular, their brilliance, as has been pointed out,<sup>66</sup> could also have had the capacity to deal with the unexpected and to impress foreigners; Cortés's response in the image that accompanies these lines seems to stress this possibility (see Fig. 8). Through the presentation of these specific objects the Mexica domination redefined itself for the last time, just as the Spaniards arrived. Instead of an act of resignation or false superstition, Moctezuma's gesture could have been designed to show the force of his political territory, through the panoply of these powerful things, coming from the fairest provinces controlled by the Triple Alliance.<sup>67</sup>

Nonetheless, here again, a critique of the source is necessary. The *Florentine Codex* was probably composed at a period already under the strong influence of texts such as the letters of Cortés or López de Gómara's *Historia*, published in Spain and very probably immediately available in New Spain, where the fiction of a political chain between Moctezuma, Cortés and Charles V was presented as a rationale for the conquest (see Figs 2–3).<sup>68</sup> The insistence on the precious nature of the treasure and the act of gift-giving added to this myth construction,<sup>69</sup> which in turn, provided the means for the writers and painters of the *Codex* retrospectively to re-empower the *tlatoni*. Hence, our proposal of spatial narrative: in these texts and images, materials and shapes of the Old and the New World create complex dynamics where territories are redefined through the concrete presence of the travelled objects.

### Made in New Spain, or the heraldic 'art of describing'

The sources analysed up to this point such as inventories, letters and chronicles – sometimes written retrospectively – concern objects having been exchanged, produced and sent before the actual war of conquest. Even the items made in Tenochtitlan in 1520 and described by the Conquistador in his *Second Letter* were commissioned before the beginning of the open confrontation, while the Spaniards were still 'guests' in the city. In May 1522, less than one year after the fall of Tenochtitlan (13 August 1521), Cortés prepared anew three large shipments for Spain; d'Anghiera openly re-

ferred to them as 'spoils of war'.<sup>70</sup> The first two were sent to the king and represented the Royal Fifth. The third was addressed to thirteen churches and monasteries, and to twenty-three high ecclesiastical and civic dignitaries. Even if most of these shipments were (probably) captured by the French pirate Jean Florin<sup>71</sup> (or perhaps by Giovanni da Verazzano?) – several inventories of them remain. One listing the objects to be disseminated throughout Spain is particularly intriguing: it is titled *Memoria de los plumajes y joyas que enviaba Hernán Cortés a iglesias, monasterios y personas de España* and lists 116 items, mainly shields, and almost entirely composed of feather works.<sup>72</sup>

In this list each of the objects is described in detail, but these details are quite different from those given in the inventory of 1519. Firstly, in the boxes that left in 1522 for Spain, each object was addressed to a particular recipient, so that the inventory allows us to reconstruct the complex web of alliances created by these gifts. Feather shields, capes and other spectacular objects were sent from what Cortés already proposed to call 'New Spain' to the highest dignitaries and key institutions of the Iberian peninsula, from Toledo to Santiago de Galicia, Tortosa to Seville, passing through Tordesillas, Oviedo, Ávila, Burgos and Ciudad Real. Almost every one of the *insignes ciudades de España* (noble cities of Spain) of the time form part of this list. Along with its wide geographical reach, it is necessary to examine the individual recipients of the shipment. These included convents (such as Our Lady of Guadalupe), monasteries (like St Francis in Medellín), churches or cathedrals (for instance, Our Lady of Antigua, Seville), and specific chapels (that of St Ildefons, of the cathedral of Toledo). Between the functionaries named in the inventory we find bishops (of Burgos and of Palencia), cardinals (of Tortosa), royal secretaries, the Constable and the Admiral of Castile, as well as a panoply of other individuals less easy to identify.

Each recipient – whether place or person – received between one and four objects, with two understandable exceptions. Fourteen pieces were sent to the Monastery of St Francis of Medellín, the Estremaduran church of Cortés's birthplace and from where the mission of the Twelve Franciscans would leave for New Spain a year later. Eleven items are addressed to the Bishop of Burgos, Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, the influential enemy of Cortés in Spain; he was a functionary both of the Council of the Indies and the

Casa de Contratación. His hate for Cortés was proverbial:<sup>73</sup> he probably delayed publication of the Second Letter, written in 1520 and printed only in November 1522 by Juan Cromberger in Seville.<sup>74</sup> During the litigation between Cortés and Velázquez (the latter claiming credit for the conquest of Mexico), the Bishop had been recused by both the Emperor and the Pope for being too openly in support of Velázquez. Yet López de Gómara noted that ‘all the affairs concerning the Indies depended on the Bishop’,<sup>75</sup> and this could explain why the Conquistador tried to earn his favour by sending him in 1522 eleven magnificent pieces and making sure that these were, to the last item, exactly right for him (*para él*). The officials directly involved in judging the case were also recipients of objects listed in the inventory: the commander Hernando de la Vega, Lorenzo Galindez de Carbajal, the signatory Don García de Padilla and the secretary Francisco de Cobos (another influential figure in decisions regarding the New World),<sup>76</sup> whom López de Gómara said countersigned the final judgment, in favour of Cortés, on 22 October 1522.<sup>77</sup> Each of these functionaries received two or three feather shields.

Another interesting group of people appearing as recipients of the shipment were the most powerful officials powerful during the Comuneros Revolt – the uprising of the Castilian communities against Charles V in 1520–21: along with the above-mentioned García de Padilla, we find the Bishop Pedro Ruíz de la Mota, the Admiral of Castile, Fadrique II Enríquez de Cabrera, and the Constable Íñigo Fernández de Velasco y Mendoza, each of whom received three feather shields. Other recipients included the Captain-General of the Army, Antonio de Fonseca, three officials of the Casa de Contratación, and Juan de Samano, secretary of Charles V and of the Council of the Indies, ‘a very prudent and entrepreneurial man’ (*hombre muy cuerdo y de negocios*), as López de Gómara wrote.<sup>78</sup>

But along with the particular peninsular destinations and recipients of the shipment, we may enquire as to how the objects were ‘described’ in the list prepared from Mexico and why their particular ‘language’ is relevant? In contrast to the inventory of 1519, in which the shields may be referred to as ‘*una rodela grande de plumaje de diversas colores hecha a manera de media casulla aforrada en cuero de animal*’ (a big shield of featherwork, made of different colours, and like half a chasuble, lined with animal hide), Cortés employs now a bold heraldic language to identify

each feather item. He uses, for instance, the term *campo* (field) as a synonym of surface, following precisely the heraldic terminology of the time. He also mentions the presence of metals, and animals, and the pertinent combination of colours, specifying always the exact position of each element:

For the Bishop of Burgos:

A cape, like a bishop’s cape [*una muceta*], the field blue embroidered with thick gold (*una capa a manera de muceta, el campo azul de argentería de oro gruesa . . .*).

For Doctor Carbajal:

Two shields; one has the field green with a monster of blue and gold, the other one, the field blue and a coloured serpent in the centre (*dos rodelas, la una el campo verde con un monstruo azul e de oro, la otra el campo azul e una sierpe colorada e oro en medio*).<sup>79</sup>

This heraldic vocabulary is not without significance. Even without imagining that Cortés had travelled with a *libro de armas* – as his fellow explorer Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo did ‘by sea and land’<sup>80</sup> – the language of armorials was familiar to any *hidalgo* at that time. The Conquistador could thus easily have ‘blazoned’ these objects following a nomenclature that he had already internalized but which, in spite of its strict conventions,<sup>81</sup> also allowed room for creative use.<sup>82</sup> Throughout the text of the inventory of 1522, these objects spelled out his unique ‘armorial achievement’ for a new territory, presented in conventional heraldic terms. This formal style allows Cortés to translate the military force of his achievements and to reinforce his position in Spain, at a time when he was judged as in opposition to Velázquez.

Cortés’s inventory of 1522 is in this sense paradigmatic of the questions asked at the beginning of this article. It was exactly the particular textual presence of that inventory – the use of heraldic terminology – that transformed the objects listed in the text into a potential ‘coat of arms’ of the conquered territory, and of the conqueror himself. On the other hand through the exact specification of each recipient of items sent from Tenochtitlan to Spain, the inventory also articulates a powerful cartography capable of weaving together New Spain and the Iberian peninsula. The inventory therefore aptly conveyed the idea of an existent territory of New Spain but also an organic image of Spain after the Comuneros Revolt.

Even if the shipment never arrived in Spain,<sup>83</sup> the inventory evidently did. Today we know each one of

the pieces it contained and the recipients to whom they were addressed, thanks to a nineteenth-century copy of an original document personally signed by Cortés.<sup>84</sup> And perhaps, even though the items never reached Spain, the specific qualities of the inventory were already powerful enough to represent, as in a heraldic manual, a kind of 'grammar' of Cortés's territory. This could explain why, a few months after the *Memoria de los plumajes* was written in this specific style, his dispute with Velázquez was settled in his favour, and he was named Captain-General of New Spain.<sup>85</sup> Cortés then repeatedly petitioned to be granted his own coat of arms: his request was granted on 7 March 1525, with a heraldic composition that acknowledged his achievements in New Spain.<sup>86</sup>

### Cortesian objects?

In October 1524, before setting out on the expedition to the Hibueras, Cortés prepared two new shipments for the Emperor. The gifts were brought to Spain by Diego de Soto, along with the Fourth Letter and the inventories.<sup>87</sup> Here again, as in the Second Letter, the Conquistador acknowledges that he had himself commissioned certain works referred to as 'some things that I have done here'.<sup>88</sup> We know, for instance, that he had designed the famous silver phoenix with the modest inscription: 'This [the bird] was born without an equal; I [Cortés] am second to none in serving you; and you without equal in the world'.<sup>89</sup> The inventory of 1524 records, among other items, the presence of spoons, medals, a rosary made with seventy-seven gold beads and a rose, and an intriguing 'image of the Kings', which it is tempting to relate to the feather triptych today in the Museo de América in Madrid. The year previously, the Franciscan Pedro de Gante had arrived in New Spain where he developed an intensive project to Christianize through the use of images and by training local artists to produce this specific kind of object. The same 'image of the kings' seems also to reappear in two later inventories of Charles V in which it is recorded already as 'old' – possibly due to its having been made twenty-five years earlier and having been carelessly preserved.<sup>90</sup>

Details of this mixed production of objects become more and more visible in textual sources during the following years. The inventory of the precious things sent to the Emperor in September 1526 is now inun-

dated with objects like '*una bolsa flamenca con unos pescadillos por pinjantes*' (a Flemish bag with little fishes hanging from it), '*un leoncillo con un chalchihui en las espaldas*' (a small lion with a chalchihui on its back), several images, '*un rosario que tiene sesenta cuentas crecidas en una sarta y entrelas dos pejes grandes con alas y un cigarrón grande*' (a rosary with sixty beads threaded on a string and between them two big fishes with wings and a big grasshopper), '*una cadenilla de eslabones largos y un Crucifijo al cabo*' (a chain with large links, and a crucifix at the end), '*otra culebra revuelta, con un chalchiui y una perla en medio, y una cruz en las espaldas con sus pinjantes*' (a coiled snake with a chalchihui and a pearl in the middle, and a cross on the back with its pendants), and '*un crucifijo grande con una cruz torcida con tres chalchuiques en las espaldas de la cruz y cuarenta e ocho cuentas a manera de campanillas*' (a large crucifix with a twisted cross with three chalchuiques on the back of the cross and forty-eight beads like small bells).<sup>91</sup>

In 1528, it was the Conquistador who personally brought from overseas 'a perfect museum of Mexican objects'.<sup>92</sup> After more than twenty years – he had left for Hispaniola in 1504 – he returned to present himself before Charles V during his *juicio de residencia* (judgment of residence), and López de Gómara tells us that 'he brought as offerings a great quantity of feather and fur mantles, fans, shields, featherworks, stone mirrors and things of that sort'.<sup>93</sup> He also writes that apart from these spectacular things Cortés also brought, for personal use only, several emeralds '*que uvo de los indios, finisimas*' (obtained from the Indians, very fine), carved with Latin inscriptions, which he would give to his bride Juana de Zuñiga, whom he met and married after arriving back in Spain.<sup>94</sup> In April 1529 Cortés sent to Pope Clement VII further precious gifts, together with a *Memorial* and some Indians whom he had brought from overseas.<sup>95</sup>

Several of the Indians who arrived in Spain were depicted, in 1529, by the German artist Christoph Weiditz in thirteen illustrations of his *Trachtenbuch*. The third and the fifth of these images<sup>96</sup> are particularly interesting in relation to the present article (Figs. 9–10). One is accompanied by the inscription 'This is also the Indian manner, how they have brought wooden jugs with them, out of which they drink', and the other, 'This is also an Indian, a nobleman of their kind'. An intriguing wooden jug and a feather shield decorated with a cross appear respectively in the hands of the two



Fig. 9. Christoph Weiditz, *Indian with wooden jug*, 1529. Courtesy of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

travellers, challenging both the connoisseurs of Spanish and Pre-Hispanic art to decide whether these objects might be of ‘Mesoamerican’ or of ‘Peninsular’ origin. It is clearly risky, furthermore, to take these illustrations as ethnographic ‘records’ of the very objects circulating at the Spanish court in 1529, since Weiditz may quite possibly have reinterpreted them artistically. For instance, the chromatic matching between the feather mantle and the jug (Fig. 9), both traversed by red, blue, and white stripes could also have resulted from personal choice on the part of the artist. But this detail could also point to the fact that some of the objects brought to Spain – and produced for that very occasion – had been made to be paraded at court in order to convey an ideal and harmonious image of the territory overseas. As for the feather shield carried in the second image (Fig. 10), the blue cross with its decorative terminals recall those painted on the banners prepared for Cortés in Cuba in 1519 and borne by his ships on their arrival at the Mexican coast, inscribed with the phrase ‘*In hoc signo vincemus*’ – an evident allusion to Constantine’s motto.<sup>97</sup>



Fig. 10. Christoph Weiditz, *Indian with feather shield decorated with a cross*, 1529. Courtesy of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

Neither Pre-Hispanic nor Peninsular, but not ‘colonial’ either, the wooden jug and the feather shields with cross patterns are very probably already the kind of things produced explicitly for Cortés since his arrival on the coast of Veracruz ten years earlier.<sup>98</sup> Along with the numerous objects tracked throughout these pages, we could perhaps refer to them as ‘Cortesian’ objects, a category that allows us both to post-date some items and to pre-date others. If the ‘Pre-Hispanic’ items in Cortés’s lists could already have been made between his arrival and their shipment, other ‘colonial’ items referred to by art historians or curators as having been composed in the mid-sixteenth century<sup>99</sup> could equally have been realized within the same period, that is to say, in the very first decade after the conquest. The designation of these objects as ‘Cortesian’ also underlines the way in which they were produced if not for then at least in response to the Conquistador, and to the artistic world introduced by the Spaniards. To speak of ‘Cortés’s objects’, and even ‘Cortesian objects’, permits



us also to consider the totemic and therefore political role they played in the process of the creation of New Spain. We could even say, alluding to Philippe Descola's proposal on the four modes of relationship to nature,<sup>100</sup> that Cortés changed the animistic relationship between material and human (characterized as 'indigenous' in an early German pamphlet)<sup>101</sup> into a totemic relationship. Under the protection of these objects, a new territory – New Spain – was born.

### Inventories and displays between space and time

Cortés continued to make use of gifts to legitimate 'his' territory throughout his life. Before leaving for Spain, in 1527, he had provided the expedition of Álvaro de Saavedra de Cerón to the Moluccas with several objects – among other things, thirty-eight feather pieces (*treinta y ocho piezas de pluma rica que costaron treinta y ocho pesos*) that could be used to *rescatar* or to offer to the local population. But above all, these feather pieces represented the point of departure of Saavedra's expedition: New Spain. Once back in Mexico (where he returned from Spain in 1530), in April 1536 Cortés sent to Francisco Pizarro in Lima several objects along with soldiers and arms in order to support the conquistadors there, but also to explore the possibilities of a Mexican-Peruvian commerce.<sup>102</sup> We can also imagine the kinds of objects he would have brought back in December 1539, when he embarked again for Spain to defend his rights before the Council of the Indies and the Emperor. Another feather object, the famous Mass of St Gregory – now in the Musée des Jacobins, in Auch (France) – made in the workshop of Cortés's close companion Pedro de Gante and precisely dated to 1539 could be also a 'Cortesian' object; even if officially sent as a gift of the new Indian governor of the city, Diego Huanitzin, to Pope Paul III, the feather painting may, in fact, have been created under the patronage of the Conquistador in order to gain the support of the Pontifex during the *proceso de residencia*.<sup>103</sup>

To develop further the implication of the adjective 'Cortesian', I shall end with some considerations on two other documents: the lists of objects found in the houses belonging to Cortés in Spain and those kept by the Conquistador in New Spain and inventoried after his death.

At the end of September 1548, on the steps of the cathedral of Seville, the personal goods of Cortés were sold over a period of four days for a few *reales*.<sup>104</sup> A small inventory lists old clothes, wool mattresses, stoves, linens, copper basins and jugs, a chair, steps, some *guadamecíes*, and also two books, one on theology and the other referred to as '*un libro de la esfera tratatus*'. The editor of this inventory writes that 'no reminder of his Mexican adventures remain in these goods' (*ningún recuerdo de sus andanzas mexicanas queda en estos bienes*).<sup>105</sup> However, we know today that the treatise *De Sphaera* – a major astrological and astronomical bestseller of Western culture, written by Johannes de Sacrobosco around 1230 and widely published in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries specifically as a 'fundamental element of the desperate race for control of the New World'<sup>106</sup> – was employed as a real tool in creating understanding and in containing and capturing the existence of new lands in the Aristotelian and scholastic tradition. Furthermore, the copy possessed by the Conquistador seems to have been the Sevillian translation published by Jerónimo de Chaves, where a particular novelty appeared: in a chapter devoted to the spherical nature of the ocean, the Spanish translator of Sacrobosco has included an image, in form of a demonstration (Fig. 11). Here we see a ship travelling across the globe but if we look closely we can see that its trajectory points toward New Spain. The text explains that two navigators figured on the main topsail and on the topmast, are 'discovering', with a slight difference of time, a new land. Jerónimo de Chaves *explicitates* that this is due to the curving surface of the water, following the spherical form of the earth, which allows the navigator on the topsail to see first a new land approaching. What interests us here is that the territory to which Cortés had tirelessly given visibility through thousands of objects shipped and listed, is now cartographically represented in a further object, Sacrobosco's book, that he had in his possession. It is not impossible to imagine that the Sevillian edition of 1545, and in particular the inclusion of this image, was influenced by the Conquistador himself, who lived in the city at just that time.

One year later, between July and August 1549, Cortés's houses and mills of Cuernavaca were also inventoried.<sup>107</sup> Tapestries, silver pieces, chairs, coffers from Flanders, liturgical books, textiles of silk (whose cultivation Cortés had recently established in the region<sup>108</sup>), *guadamecíes*, along with 'several altar-cloths,



Fig. 11. Demonstration of the spherical nature of the ocean, with New Spain represented (upper left). Illustration of Jerónimo de Chaves's translation of Sacrobosco's *De Sphaera* (Seville, 1545), fol. 27. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.

made with the linen of the land' are included in the lists.<sup>109</sup>

Though his Sevillian house seemed to lack specific testaments of Mexico, the treatise *De Sphaera* can be considered a 'Cortesian object' in the sense that it includes evidence of 'his' world. Conversely, the *guadamecíes* kept in the house of Cuernavaca could be the Peninsular leather items of Arabic tradition carried westwards by the conquistadors, but could also be those produced in New Spain by local workshops perfectly imitating, and transforming, the objects of the 'others'. In this case, the Mexican *guadamecíes* – Spanish symbols par excellence – were already made in New Spain, while the *De Sphaera*, bestseller of medieval thought, even if now sold on the stairs of the cathedral of Seville, strongly evokes the New World dimension of Cortés's life.

Analysed as spatial narratives and not simply as 'dry' lists, the inventories of these composite things reveal another dimension of their descriptions and become capable of mapping a 'fictional' geography of New Spain,<sup>110</sup> a territory (and an 'idea') not only born under the sign of violence and death, but also via creative and artistic originality. This paradox between destruction and innovation though difficult to understand today, concerns in fact the history of collections and of museums as sites of tension between decontextualization, fragmentation, uprooting, and –



Fig. 12. Feather shield known in Náhuatl as *xicalcolihqui chimalli*, probably made after Cortés's arrival (1519), and shipped by him to the Old World as a token of the process of conquest. Photograph: P. Frankenstein and H. Zwietasch. Courtesy of the Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

on the other hand – of creativity and imagination. Addressing these instabilities in an open manner in permanent and temporal displays of the objects themselves, without over-simplifying their biographies or seeking at all costs their 'pure' pedigrees (Pre-Hispanic, Spanish, or even colonial), poses a considerable problem for the curator. How, for instance, are the beautiful feather shields now housed in Stuttgart (Fig. 12) to be presented? Even if similar to those paid as tribute to Moctezuma before the arrival of the Spaniards, they were, perhaps, already specifically made for (or 'paid to') Cortés and probably were even used by his allies in the war of conquest, before being presented overseas through the medium of the Conquistador's inventory in a meaningful heraldic language. To reveal the significance of these multiple historical, anthropological and artistic dimensions, constitutes one of the major challenges in their presentation today.

#### Address for correspondence

Professor Alessandra Russo, Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University, 612 West 116th Street, 10027 New York, USA.  
ar2701@columbia.edu

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## Notes and references

- Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *De Orbe Novo. The Eight Decades* (1st edn. 1530), trans. by Francis Augustus MacNutt (New York, 1912), pp. 106, 191, 365.
- There are other numerous references, in the *Fourth Decade*, to objects coming from the New World, and in particular to Cortés's gifts to the Queen and the Prince, in 1519: Anghiera, op. cit. (note 1), books VIII–IX.
- Adalgisa Lugli, *Naturalia et mirabilia: il collezionismo enciclopedico nelle Wunderkammern d'Europa* (Milan, 1983). As is well known, prior to Lugli's survey the major study on this topic had been that of Julius von Schlosser, *Die Kunst und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance* (Leipzig, 1908). A non-exhaustive list of publications on the subject includes: Giuseppe Olmi, 'Dal "teatro del mondo" ai mondi inventariati. Aspetti e forme del collezionismo nell'età moderna', in Paola Barocchi and Giovanna Ragoneri (eds), *Gli Uffizi. Quattro secoli di una galleria* (Florence, 1983); Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds), *The Origins of Museums. The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 1985); Krzysstof Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs, curieux* (Paris, 1987); Antoine Schnapper, *Le géant, la licorne et la tulipe* (Paris, 1993); Horst Bredekamp, *Antikensehnsucht und Maschinenglauben. Die Geschichte der Kustkammer und die Zukunft der Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, 1993), English translation, *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine* (Princeton, 1995); Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature. Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley and London, 1996); Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, 1998); Patricia Falguières, *Les Chambres des merveilles* (Paris, 1999); Mary Baine Campbell, *Wonder & Science. Imagining Worlds in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, 2001); Helmut Trnek and Nuno Vassallo e Silva (eds), *Exotica. The Portuguese Discoveries and the Renaissance Kunstkammer* (Lisbon, 2001); R. J. W. Evans and Alexander Marr (eds.), *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (London, 2006); *Le théâtre de la curiosité. XVI–XVIIe siècles*, Cahiers V. L. Saulnier 25 (2008). See also the recent synthesis by Isabel Yaya, 'Wonders of America: the curiosity cabinet as a site of representation and knowledge', *Journal of the History of Collections* 20 (2008), pp. 173–88.
- See, for instance, the theoretical reflections in the excellent case-study of Deanna MacDonald, 'Collecting a New World: the ethnographic collections of Margaret of Austria', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33/3 (2002), pp. 649–63; on 23 August 1523, a gift from Charles V enriched his aunt's collection with several objects coming from the New World (p. 653).
- On the display of objects as 'machines', see Bredekamp, op. cit. (note 3). On scenography, see Myriam Marrache-Gouraud, 'Montrer et cacher: scénographie de quelques collections de curiosités', in *Le théâtre de la curiosité*, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 139–48.
- Anne E. C. McCants, 'Exotic goods, popular consumption, and the standard of living: thinking about globalization in the early modern world', *Journal of World History* 4 (2007), pp. 433–62.
- Pietro Martire d'Anghiera was already conscious of this characteristic when he wrote 'As I fear the enumeration of these things may tire rather than divert Your Holiness, I pass them over in silence': Anghiera, op. cit. (note 1), *Fourth Decade*, book IX.
- See Christian Feest's remarks on the separation between archival and curatorial knowledge, and the complementary difficulties in tracking objects in historical sources (without first knowing the collections), or in interpreting their presence in the collections (without knowing the archives): Christian Feest, 'Vienna's Mexican treasures. Aztec, Mixtec, and Tarascan works from 16th century Austrian collections', *Archiv für Völkerkunde* 45 (1990), pp. 1–64.
- Umberto Eco, *Vertige de la liste* (Paris, 2008).
- An excellent sample of the different types of inventories can be found in the sixty-three documents published by Fernando Checa (ed.), *Los inventarios de Carlos V y la familia imperial / The Inventories of Charles V and the Imperial Family* (Madrid, 2010). For inventories of permanent collections yet characterized by mobility, one may cite the 'Inventario de vajillas, pinturas y objetos litúrgicos' (1556) that specifies: 'S'ensuyt la vacelle d'argent, dorée et blanche et autres meubles que par ordonnance de l'Empereur François de Vallières a delivre et mys es main de Jehan Sterke pour les garder et conduire, en suyvant sa Majesté'.
- Codex 218, 219, 220 of the Mediceo-Laurenziana Library; I have used the facsimile of the *Florentine Codex* published as Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las Cosas de la Nueva España* (Florence, 1995).
- In my title, I follow here the considerations of Claudio Lömnitz on post-independent Mexican national history, in his *Death and the Idea of Mexico* (New York, 2005).
- A larger context for this interpretation can be found in Jaime Cuadriello, 'El origen del reino y la configuración de su empresa', in *Los pinceles de la Historia. El origen del reino de la Nueva España 1680–1750* (Mexico, 1998), pp. 51–107.
- The list, based on the manuscript kept in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (Codex Ser. Nova 1600) was first published by Martín Fernández Navarrete, in *Colección de Documentos inéditos para la Historia de España* (Madrid, 1842), vol. 1, pp. 461–72. Another important nineteenth-century edition is that by Pascual de Gayangos, *Cartas y Relaciones de Hernán Cortés al Emperador Carlos V* (Paris, 1866), pp. 28–34. One of the earliest English translations was published by Marshall Saville, *The Goldsmith's Art in Ancient Mexico* (New York, 1920), pp. 21–32. The modern editions of the list are those published as part of the *Carta de Cabildo* in Hernán

- Cortés, *Cartas de Relación (1519-1526)*, ed. Angel Delgado Gómez (Madrid, 1993); the English translation I have used is that by Antony Pagden, *Letters from Mexico* (New York, 1971, reprinted New Haven and London, 2001).
- 15 John H. Elliot, 'Cortés, Velázquez and Charles V', in Pagden, op. cit. (note 14), nos. XI-XXXVII.
  - 16 The *Instrucciones* of Velázquez to Cortés make it clear that he also wanted details of the provenance of the objects *rescatados*, in particular of the gold pieces: 'y sabréis si aquellas cosas de oro labradas se labran allí entre ellos, las traen o rescatan de otras partes'. 'Instrucción de Diego Velázquez a Hernán Cortés', in José Luis Martínez (ed.), *Documentos Cortesianos* (México, 1990), vol. 1, doc. 1. (pp. 45-57, at p. 55). Francisco López de Gómara insisted on this point: Grijalba had simply 'traded' with the Indians, while Cortés's exchanges would be of another kind. The practice of *rescate* was described by this author as: 'rescatar para los gastos . . . que es feriar mercería por oro y plata' (Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias*, cap. VII (first edn. 1552; first separate edition of the part devoted to the conquest of Mexico, as *Historia de la Conquista de México* (Antwerp, 1554)). I have used the modern edition published as *La Conquista de México* (Madrid, 1987). Serge Gruzinski points out that through these exchanges, the objects penetrate the worlds more rapidly than people themselves: Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War. Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492-2019)* (French edn, Paris, 1990; trans., Durham and London, 2001), chapter 2.
  - 17 'Y halló allí dos principales de los indios, a los cuales dio ciertas prescas de vestir de su persona', Cortés, op. cit. (note 14), p. 133: 'Le hizo vestir una camisa de holanda, y un sayón de terciopelo y una cinta de oro, con lo cual el dicho cacique fue muy contento y alegre . . .' López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 134. On the mutual exchange of objects accompanying the first contacts, and on the 'acculturation of appearances', see Carmen Bernard and Serge Gruzinski, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo. Del Descubrimiento a la Conquista* (French edn, Paris, 1991; trans. Mexico, 1996), pp. 266-9.
  - 18 Pagden, op. cit. (note 14), p. 24. Original in Spanish: 'Y el otro día adelante vino el dicho cacique como había quedado, y hizo tender una manta blanca delante del capitán, y ofrecióles ciertas preciosas joyas de oro poniéndolas sobre la manta, de las cuales y de otras que después se tuvieron hacemos particular relación a V.M. en un memorial que nuestros procuradores llevan'. Delgado Gómez, op. cit. (note 14), p. 134.
  - 19 'Segund la muestra de oro que el dicho cacique traído se creía que debía de ser muy rica . . . ; por lo tanto que nos parecía que no(s) convenía al servicio de V. M. que en tal tierra no se hiciese lo que Diego Velázquez había mandado hacer al dicho capitán Fernando Cortés, que era rescatar todo el oro que pudiese y rescatado volverse con todo ello a la isla Fernandina para gozar solamente de ello el dicho Diego Velázquez y el dicho capitán y que lo mejor que a todos nos parecía era que en nombre de VV.RR. AA se poblase y fundase allí un pueblo en que hiese justicia' (Delgado-Gómez, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 134-5). The accent of the Letter on the fact that the breaking of Velázquez's orders was a collective decision has to be read as a reference to the *Siete Partidas* (see Victor Frankl, 'Hernán Cortés y la tradición de las Siete Partidas', *Revista de Historia de América* 53-4 (1962), pp. 9-74). On the other hand, the fact that Cortés had founded an 'independent community' yet submitted to the Crown is what it distinguishes him from the *Comuneros* (see Delgado Gómez, op. cit. (note 14), p. 17 with complete bibliography on the debate in note 24; see also Joseph Pérez, *La revolución de las comunidades de Castilla* (1st edn 1970; Madrid, 1977).
  - 20 In the description of the ceremonies, a particular role is given to human sacrifices. López de Gómara added the information that the six Indians sent along with the gifts were destined to sacrifice and 'andaban muy emplumados por la ciudad' (López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 113). As we know, for the Nahuas, to say 'inhuíyoc in nomalli' (my captive has been feathered) was equivalent to saying 'my captive is ready for sacrifice'. For the relationship between feather art and sacrifice, in the context of the process of Christianization, see Alessandra Russo, 'Plumes of sacrifice. Transformations in sixteenth-century feather art', *Res* 42 (2002), pp. 226-50. The relationship between feather art and sacrifice, in the specific context of the military conquest and its narratives, could also be investigated, for instance in the sequence of the images of Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Descripción de la ciudad y provincia de Tlaxcala* (Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 242 (U.3.15); the most recent modern edition has been published by René Acuña (San Luis Potosí, 1999)).
  - 21 'Y el oro y plata y joyas y rodela y ropa que á VV. RR. AA. enviamos con los procuradores, demás del quinto que á V. M. pertenece de que su capitán Fernando Cortés y este consejo les hacen servicio'. This sentence has been translated often omitting the initial 'And': see Saville, op. cit. (note 14), p. 22; Pagden, op. cit. (note 14), p. 40.
  - 22 '. . . del oro y plata y metales que se sacaren de minas o rescates, se cobre el quinto neto', Libro 8, título 10, ley 1.<sup>a</sup> of the *Recopilación de Indias*. At the beginning, the *quinto* concerned metals – mainly gold and silver – but also lead, tin and copper. Later, amber, and even pearls came to form part of the tax – with serious attendant problems in measuring the quantities. José Luis Martínez notes the lack of clarity in the counting of the Fifth, as presented in the inventory (José Luis Martínez, *Hernán Cortés* (Mexico, 1990), pp. 190-91). Still in Veracruz, Cortés received from the Council the right to *quintar*, that is to say, to take out, in his turn, one-fifth of the remaining quantity, for his own expenses (Martínez, op. cit. (note 16), vol. 1, p. 190).
  - 23 'Una rueda de oro grande con una figura de monstruos en medio y labrada toda de follajes, la cual pesó tres mil ochocientos pesos de oro y en esta rueda, porque era la mejor pieza que acá se ha habido y de mejor oro, se tomó el quinto para sus reales altezas que fueron dos mil castellanos que le perteneció a sus majestades de su quinto y derecho real.' The English translation is slightly different from that proposed by Pagden, op. cit. (note 14), p. 40.
  - 24 'todo el oro y plata y joyas que en esta tierra habemos habido demás y allende de la afinta parte que de sus rentas y derechos reales le pertenece' (Delgado Gómez, op. cit. (note 14), p. 138; Pagden, op. cit. (note 14), p. 28)
  - 25 'Se entiende mil e ochocientos pesos que van demasiado en la rueda, porque de todo a sus Altezas no pertenecían de su quinto más de dos mil pesos, de diez mil que eran como sabéis, y de los collares y rodela y plata y plumajes y de todo lo demás que al concejo perteneció, ansimismo facen servicio a Sus Reales Altezas, y esto también habéis de platicar y decir a los de la Casa de la Contratación de Sevilla', *Instrucciones de Hernán Cortés a los procuradores Francisco de Montejo y Alonso Hernández Portocarrero, enviados a España, 1 de Julio de 1519*, published in Martínez, op. cit. (note 16), vol. 1, n. 4, pp. 77-85, at p. 84.
  - 26 On this image, see Cuadriello, op. cit. (note 13) ; and Jaime Cuadriello, *Las glorias de la república de Tlaxcala o la conciencia*

- como imagen sublime (Mexico, 2004), pp. 344-8, where the objects are nonetheless counted as *rescatados*, not *ofrecidos*. The fact that Pizarro is represented (almost) in the same position could illuminate the exemplary role that Cortés's conquest (and offering) of New Spain had in the subsequent wars of conquest, for instance in Peru.
- 27 Francis Augustus Macnutt, *Fernando Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico, 1485-1754* (New York and London, 1909), p. 108.
  - 28 Publications on the inventory include Saville, op. cit. (note 14); Karl Anton Nowotny, 'Die Gastgeschenke des Motecuçoma an Cortés', *Archiv für Völkerkunde* 2 (1947), pp. 210-21; Bernard Keen, *The Aztec Image in the Western Thought* (New Brunswick, 1971), pp. 63-4; Roberto García Moll, Felipe Solís and Jaime Bali, *El Tesoro de Moctezuma* (Mexico, 1990); Feest, op. cit. (note 8); Jean-Paul Duviols, 'Les cadeaux de Hernán Cortés à Charles V', in Annie Moliné-Bertrand and Jean-Pierre Duviols (eds), *Charles V et la Monarchie Universelle* (Paris, 2001), pp. 107-17.
  - 29 This second inventory, originally kept in the Manual del Tesorero de la Casa de Contratación in Seville, and today in the Archivo de las Indias, also in Seville, is of items received and differs slightly from the first. The two documents were collated by Juan Bautista Muñoz in 1784 (Gayangos, op. cit. (note 14)). The Sevillian document has been published in English by John Tatte Lanning, 'Cortés and his first official remission of treasure to Charles V', *Revista de Historia de América* no. 2 (1938), pp. 5-29.
  - 30 They were six when they arrived in Spain, but one became ill and remained in Córdoba. The five Totonacs were back in Seville from Valladolid on 22 March, but one died. The following year, along with the other who had by now recovered, they were sent to Diego Velázquez in Cuba, on 27 March 1521 (see the note by Juan Bautista Muñoz in Gayangos, op. cit. (note 14), p. 34).
  - 31 Nonetheless, the note to the inventory is dated April: 'Las cosas de suso nombradas en el dicho memorial con la carta y relación de suso dicha che el Consejo de la Vera Cruz envió, recibió el Rey don Carlos nuestro señor, como de suso se dio en Valladolid en la Semana Santa en principio del mes de abril del año del Señor de mil y quinientos y veinte años.' See Delgado Gómez, op. cit. (note 14), p. 46.
  - 32 'El Rey los hizo bien vestir a la castellana de diversas colores y con gorras de terciopelo, y las mugeres asimesmo da buen paño y tocadas a la castellana': Giovanni Ruffo da Forlì, letter dated 7 March 1520, published by Marcel Bataillon, 'Les premiers mexicains envoyés en Espagne par Cortés', *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 48 (1959), pp. 135-40.
  - 33 Christian Feest, 'Dürer et les premières évaluations européennes de l'art mexicain', in Joëlle Rostkowski and Sylvie Devers (eds), *Destins croisés. Cinq siècles de rencontres avec les Amérindiens* (Paris, 1992), pp. 107-19.
  - 34 López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16); Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (Madrid, 1632) chapter XXXIX; Antonio de Herrera and Tordesillas, *Historia general de los hechos de los Castellanos en las islas y tierra firme del Mar Oceano* (Madrid, 1601-15), vol. I, v, chapter v).
  - 35 'Eran tres hombres y dos mugeres, la color dellas poco menos de etiopia . . . Truxeron a esta Césarea Magestad dos ruedas de diámetro de ocho palmos, la una de oro la otra de plata, y en medio dellas está esculpida una silla como de barbero y sentado en ella una figura con una cara semeiante a la que pintan a los diablos con la boca abierta . . . Dezían que delante esta figura hazían sus oraciones'. Ruffo da Forlì, op. cit. (note 32), p. 139.
  - 36 Elke Bujok, 'Ethnographica in early modern *Kunstkammern* and their perception', *Journal of the History of Collections* 21 (2009), pp. 17-32, at p. 18.
  - 37 *Instrucciones de Hernán Cortés*, op. cit. (note 25), p. 84.
  - 38 Rafael Heliodoro Valle quotes and agrees with Jules Riverend saying 'a buen seguro que éste (Cortés) intervino en su redacción'. R. H. Valle, *Bibliografía de Hernán Cortés* (Mexico, 1953), p. 116.
  - 39 'Dos plumajes de colores que son para dos capacetes de pedrería que debajo se dirá . . . una mitra de pedrería azul con una figura de monstruos . . . el plumaje de que arriba se hace mención son de esta dicha mitra.' Cortés, *Carta de Cabildo*, in Delgado Gómez, op. cit. (note 14).
  - 40 Saville, op. cit. (note 16), p. 33. On *guarique*, see Gayangos note, op. cit. (note 14).
  - 41 Objects from the New World were at times catalogued as 'Moorish' (Bujok, op. cit. (note 36), p. 19). See also Markey and Keating's contribution in the present volume.
  - 42 Anghiera, op. cit. (note 1), book 9, p. 46. Gómara speaks also of 'Muchas mitras y coronas bordadas en pluma y oro labradas, y con mil colores y perlas y piedras. Muchas plumas muy gentiles, y de todas colores, no teñidas, sino naturales'. Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 112.
  - 43 Gustavo Curiel, 'El ajuar domestico del tornaviaje', in *México en el mundo de las colecciones de arte* (México, 1994), vol. III, pp. 157-209, n. 3.
  - 44 See, for instance the differences made between 'latón' and 'latón morisco' in the objects commented on by Margarita Cantera Montenegro, 'Inventarios de bienes en las iglesias riojanas dependientes de Santa María de Nájera (siglo XVI)', *Berceo* no. 150 (2006), pp. 237-50. The difference, apparently was that in the 'Moorish' brass, the alloy between copper and zinc was obtained with the aid of calamine.
  - 45 David M. Pendergast, 'Metal artifacts in Prehispanic Mesoamerica', *American Antiquity* 27 (1962), pp. 520-45.
  - 46 David Brading, *The First America. The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State 1492-1867* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 45.
  - 47 'La copa de una plancha de oro, esculpida en ella Uitzilopuchtli, dios de las batallas' (Gómara, op. cit. (note 14), p. 111). The precision given by Gómara to the figure of Uitzilopochtli helps also to counter-balance the idea that the Spaniards did not understand the sacred language of these objects, as for instance proposed by Jean Michel Massing, 'Early European images of America: the ethnographic approach', in Jay Levenson (ed.), *Circa 1492* (New Haven and London, 1991), pp. 514-20.
  - 48 Alfredo López Austin and Leonardo López Luján, *Monte Sagrado - Templo Mayor* (Mexico, 2009), pp. 427-38. The authors explain how Huitzilopochtli was still, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a recent divinity, 'a god in formation' (un dios en formación) (*ibid.*, p. 438). His iconography had not been fixed when the conquistadors arrived.
  - 49 See Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural. The Image of Huitzilopochtli in Mexico and Europe*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 79 (1989), part 2. In Europe, Uitzilopochtli became also a generic

- reference for Mexican 'deities': see Ulf Bankmann, 'Das Bild einer aztekischen Gottheit im Berliner Schloss', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für die Geschichte Berlins* 99 no. 4 (2003), pp. 546-52.
- 50 López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 111.
- 51 '[Truxeron] asimismo una adarga, no disimile de las que se acostumbra en España sino más pequeña, de algodón, cubierta de cuero . . .' Ruffo da Forlì, op. cit. (note 32), p. 139-40.
- 52 In an inventory of objects sent by Don Juan to the King of France, one entry reads: 'envióle además muchas pieles de guadamecí y muchas alfombras [de seda], que es cosa que en Francia no se han'; quoted by Ricardo Carpa, *Estudios Críticos acerca de la dominación española en América, parte quinta* (Madrid, 1896), p. 166. Later, Philip II sent several *guadamecís* to the Chinese Emperor ('Lista de cosas que debían enviarse al rey de Taibín, a través de fray Juan González de Mendoza, en nombre del rey Felipe II', Archivo de Indias, Patronato, 25, R. 3, quoted by Carmen Hsu, 'Dos cartas de Felipe II al emperador de China', *eHumanista* 4 (2004), p. 199, note 21).
- 53 Jose-Marial Madurell Marimon, *El antiguo arte del guadamecí y sus artifices* (Vich, 1973); Félix Fuente Andrés and Anna de la Soler Colomer, 'La technique du guadamecí espagnol à travers la documentation du xve au xviiie siècle', in *Le travail du cuir de la préhistoire à nos jours* (Antibes, 2001), pp. 451-63.
- 54 'Nosotros haremos guadamecíes y les daremos color de dorado y plateado como los maestros de Castilla'. Toribio de Benavente dit Motolinía, *Memoriales o libro de la Nueva España y de los naturales de ella* (1st edn, 1541; Mexico, 1971), p. 243. See also Serge Gruzinski, *La pensée métisse* (Paris, 1999), p. 95.
- 55 These items are not translated in the list published by Pagden, op. cit. (note 14), p. 45.
- 56 'Lino, lana, cuero, vidrio y hierro . . . y se fueron admirados de ver a los españoles y todas sus cosas' (López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 108).
- 57 The presence of the Hispano-Arabic vocabulary is also remarkable in this list, naming items such as *alpargatas*, *badana* and *zaragüelles*.
- 58 The list recorded by López de Gómara include 'gran cantidad de quincallería, como por ejemplo, cascabeles, espejos, sartales y cuentas de vidrio, agujas, alfileres, bolsas, agujetas, cintas, corchetes, hebillas, cuchillos, tijeras, tenazas, martillos, hachas de hierro, camisas, turbantes, cofias, gorgueras, zaragüelles y pañizuelos de lienzo; sayos, capotes, calzones, caperuzas de paño; todo lo cual lo repartió en las naos'. López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 50.
- 59 In his *Historia de las Indias* (Madrid, 1876), vol. IV, cap. CXXI, pp. 286, Las Casas says that the objects offered by Tendille to Cortés, had in fact been prepared by Moctezuma for Grijalba. López de Gómara gives the same opinion (op. cit. (note 16), p. 86).
- 60 For a further discussion of this image, and of the following one included in the *Florentine Codex*, showing Cortés wearing the objects offered by the messengers and capturing them, see Russo, op. cit. (note 20), pp. 231-4.
- 61 '[Cortés] le dio [a Teudille] un sayo de seda, una medalla y collar de vidrio, muchos sartales, espejos, Tijeras, agujas, ceñidores, camisas y tocadores, y otras quincallerías de cuero, lana y hierro, que tienen entre nosotros muy poco valor, pero que éstos estiman en mucho'. López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 83.
- 62 'Otras [cosas] que yo le di figuradas y él las mandó hacer de oro, así como imágenes, crucifijos, medallas, joyeles y collares y muchas cosas de las nuestras que le hice contrahacer. Cupieron ansimismo a Vuestra Alteza del quinto de la plata que se hobo ciento y tantos marcos, los cuales hice labrar a los naturales de platos grandes y pequeños y escudillas y tazas y cucharas, y lo labraron tan perfeto como gelo podíamos dar a entender'. (*Segunda carta*, in Delgado Gómez, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 230-31. In the English translation I have made some changes to the text given by Pagden, op. cit. (note 14), p. 101.
- 63 Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *Ep. DCL, De Orbe Novo et Cortesio. De donis ingentibus ad Regem missis [1519] dans, Pierre Martyre d'Anghiera, Opus Epistolarum . . . editio postrema Amstelodami, Typis Elzevirianis Veneunt Parisiis apud Fredericum Leonard, Typographum Regium* (1670), p. 358 (quoted by Maria Matilde Benzoni, *La cultura italiana e il Messico. Storia di un'immagine da Temistitlan all'Indipendenza 1519-1821* (Milan, 2004), pp. 9-10).
- 64 'Es verdad que tengo plata, oro, plumas, plata, armas y otras cosas y riquezas en el tesoro de mis padres y abuelos, guardado de grandes tiempos a esta parte, como es costumbre de reyes'. López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 166.
- 65 'Una mascara labrada de turquesas, tenía esta mascara labrada de las mismas piedras una culebra doblada y retorcida cuyo doblez era el pico de la nariz que luego se dividía la cola de la cabeza y la cabeza con parte del cuerpo iba sobre un ojo de manera que hacía ceja, y la cola con parte del cuerpo iba por sobre el otro ojo, y hacía otra ceja. Estaba esta mascara engerida en una corona alta y grande, llena de plumas ricas, largas y muy hermosas, de manera que poniéndose la corona sobre la cabeza se ponía la mascara en la cara'. *Florentine Codex*, op. cit. (note 11), fol. 6v.
- 66 Nicholas Saunders, 'Stealers of light, traders in brilliance: Amerindian metaphysics in the mirror of conquest', *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 33 (1998), pp. 225-52.
- 67 Frances Berdan, 'Circulation of feathers in Mesoamerica', in Diana Fane, Alessandra Russo and Gerhard Wolf (eds), *Feather Creations. Materials, Production and Circulation*, symposium papers, *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* 5 (2005), electronic resource: <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/1387>
- 68 Studying the myth associated with the return of Quetzalcoatl, Antonio Aimi, points to the paradox of the sources considered 'of the vanquished' that often confirm the versions of the sources 'of the vanquishers': Antonio Aimi, *La vera visione dei vinti* (Rome, 2001), p. 30.
- 69 Cortés kept overstressing the magnificence of Moctezuma's domination, for example through the description of his objects and of the act of gift-giving in the Second Letter: 'Y no le parezca a Vuestra Sacra Majestad fabuloso lo que digo, pues es verdad que todas las cosas criadas así en la tierra como en la mar de que el dicho Muteçuma pudiese tener conocimiento tenía contrahechas muy al natural así de oro y de plata como de pedrería y de plumas en tanta perfición que casi ellas mesmas parecían, de las cuales todas me dio para Vuestra Alteza . . . demás de esto me dio el dicho Muteçuma mucha ropa de la suya, que era tal, que considerada ser toda de algodón y sin seda, en todo el mundo no se podía hacer ni tejer otra tal ni de tantas ni tan diversas y naturales colores ni labores, en que había ropas de hombres y de mujeres muy maravillosas'. Delgado Gómez, op. cit., (note 14), pp. 230-31.
- 70 Anghiera, op. cit. (note 1) *Fifth Decade*, book x, p. 195.

- 71 See Martínez, op. cit. (note 16), p. 222; Anghiera, op. cit. (note 1), *Eighth Decade*, book vi, p. 365.
- 72 'Memoria', in *Documentos cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16), vol. 1, doc. 24. I have developed the analysis of the places listed in this inventory in relationship to some statements found in the Florentine Codex on the 'geography' of feather art, in my article, 'Everywhere in this New Spain. Extension and articulation of an artistic world', *Source. Notes in the History of Art* 3 (2010), pp. 12-17. The variety of shields coming from the New World, that had impressed Albrecht Dürer (*Viaggio nei Paesi Bassi* (Turin, 1995), p. 77) is celebrated in the inventory of the Armería of Valladolid (1558): 'rodela de las Yndias, diferentes unas de otras . . . así se guardaron en un cofre y las de mejores parecen adargas que tienen plumas alrededor quedaron envueltas en sus fundas de lienzo' (in *Los inventarios de Carlos V*, op. cit. (note 10), p. 681).
- 73 'Tenía el Obispo de Burgos, Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, que gobernaba las Indias, tanta enemistad y odio a Hernán Cortés, o tanto cariño a Diego Velázquez, que desfavorecía y encubría sus hechos y servicios', López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 343.
- 74 Keen, op. cit. (note 28), p. 67.
- 75 'Pendían del Obispo todos los negocios de las Indias'; López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 343. See also Lorenzo Silva Ortiz, 'La labor de D. Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca en los asuntos indios desde el advenimiento de Carlos I hasta su muerte en 1524', in *El emperador Carlos y su tiempo: actas IX Jornadas Nacionales de Historia Militar* (Seville, 2000), pp. 173-96.
- 76 Pérez, op. cit. (note 19), p. 104.
- 77 López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 345.
- 78 This manuscript copy of the Fifth Letter is today part of the collection of the John Brown Library (Codex Sp. 15).
- 79 *Memoria*, op. cit. (note 72), pp. 246, 248.
- 80 Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo reminds us: 'yo tengo un libro destos de armas y digo os que ha más de cinquenta años y hese andado conmigo por mar y por tierra todo este tiempo que os digo' (*Batallas y Quinquagenas* (1556), quoted by Jesús Carrillo Castillo, 'Cultura cortesana e imperio: el Libro del blazon de Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo', *Locus Amoenus* 4 (1998-9), pp. 137-54, at p. 144. See also *Las Armerías en Europa al comienzo de la Edad Moderna y su proyección en el Nuevo Mundo*, ed. Faustino Menéndez Pidal de Navascués (Madrid, 1993).
- 81 Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas*, quoted by Carrillo Castillo, op. cit. (note 80), p. 142. For a much earlier heraldic book (by the Italian Bartolo de Sassoferrato, c.1350), which explains clearly the guidelines for painting (and describing) coats of arms, see Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, 'El Tractatus de Insigniis et Armis de Bartolo y su influencia en Europa (con la edición de una traducción castellana cuatrocentista)', *Emblemata* 2 (1996), esp. pp. 59-62 of the treaty.
- 82 Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería: poética del orden de caballería* (Madrid, 2009), cap. vi, 'Poética del emblema caballeresco': 'La heráldica, o por mejor decir, la poética del emblema es el proceso creativo mediante el cual las clases, linajes, familias y sujeto que forman parte de negociaciones en el poder se hacen presentes tanto en la geografía como en la historia, al tiempo que expresan el modo en que esta experiencia ha de ser sometida a una hermenéutica basada en los elementos que conforman el emblema – formas, borduras, colores, esmaltes, muebles, etc.' (p. 228).
- 83 The inventory of Margaret of Austria, of 1523 records for instance a 'chasuble of Indian cloth . . . made to send to the modern pope'. 'Modern' might here have the meaning of 'new', and in fact 1523 was the year of election of both Adrian VI and Clement VII, as MacDonald observes; Indian cloth could easily be read as being composed of feathers: MacDonald, op. cit. (note 4), p. 658. The same author comments on this piece as 'one of the earliest noted colonial artifacts (all other items were precolonial)'.  
84 Kept in the Archivo General de Indias, see *Memoria*, op. cit. (note 72).
- 85 'Real Cédula de nombramiento de Hernán Cortés como gobernador y capitán general de la Nueva España e instrucciones para su gobierno', doc. no. 25 of the *Documentos Cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16).
- 86 In particular, the city of Tenochtitlan was represented, and there were allusions also to the Triple Alliance and to seven lords in chains ('Cédula de Carlos V a Hernán Cortés con que se concede escudo de armas', in *Documentos Cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16), pp. 331-5).
- 87 'Relación de las cosas de oro que van en un cajón para su majestad las cuales lleva a su cargo Diego de Soto', and 'Relación de las cosas que lleva Diego de Soto, del señor gobernador, allende de lo que lleva firmado en un cuaderno de ciertos pliegos de papel, para el rey': nos 37 and 38 in *Documentos Cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16).
- 88 'Algunas [cosas] que después acá yo he hecho' (Fourth Letter, Delgado Gómez, op. cit. (note 16), p. 514). Pagden (op. cit. (note 16), p. 330 translates it as '(things) which I have acquired since then'.
- 89 'Aquesta nació sin par; yo en serviros sin Segundo; vos sin igual en el mundo'. The episode is recounted by Bernal Díaz del Castillo (translation of the inscription in English by Robert Bontine Cunningham Graham in *Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Being Some Account of Him, taken from his True History of the Conquest of New Spain* (New York, 1915), p. 191).
- 90 The image is described as 'una imagen de los Tres Reyes hecha en tapicería a la manera de las Indias', in the inventories of Brussels (1545 and 1556) published by René Laurent, *1492-1992. Evocation de la conquête de l'Amérique espagnole au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Brussels, 1992), and as 'Una ymagen del ofrescimiento de los tres reyes en tela de Yndias. Esta vieja', in the inventories of Valladolid (1559 and 1561) kept in Simancas, and published along with that of Brussels, by Paz Cabello, 'Inventarios de objetos incas pertenecientes a Carlos V: estudio sobre la colección, traducción y transcripción de los documentos', *Anales del Museo de America* 2 (1994), pp. 33-61.
- 91 *Joyas que Hernán Cortés envió a España desde México inventariadas por Cristóbal de Oñate*, 25 de septiembre de 1526, *Documentos Cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16), vol. 1, doc. 62, pp. 412-15. The pendant ('dije con el triunfo de la cruz sobre la muerte') reproduced by Curiel (op. cit. (note 43), p. 178) calls to mind this kind of assemblage.
- 92 Francis Augustus Macnutt, *Fernando Cortés. His Five Letters of Relation to the Emperor Charles V* (Cleveland, 1908), p. 418.
- 93 'Traía para dar gran suma de mantas de plumas y pelo, ventallas, rodela, plumajes, espejos de piedras y cosas así', López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 403.
- 94 López de Gómara specifies that for one of these emeralds, the Genoese would have given him 40,000 ducats to sell them to the Grand Turk, but Cortés would not accept the offer. The following episode mentioning the emeralds occurs, paradoxically, while he is fighting in 1541 in Algiers, where

- he lost them on the field of battle: 'por el miedo de perder el dinero y joyas que llevaba, dando al través se ciñó un paño con las riquísimas cinco esmeraldas que dije valer cien mil ducados; y se le perdieron entre los grandes lodos y muchos hombres; y así le costó a él aquella Guerra más que a ninguno'. López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), p. 491.
- 95 'Un rico presente de piedras ricas y joyas de oro, y dos indios maestros de jugar el palo con los pies'. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, op. cit. (note 34), cap. cxxv). Clement VII issued two bulls, the first recognizing two of Cortés's sons and one daughter; the second giving him the *patronato* of the Hospital de la Concepción (Martínez, op. cit. (note 22), pp. 514-15). On the Indians travelling in 1529 to Spain, see Howard F. Cline, 'Hernando Cortés and the Aztec Indians in Spain', *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 26 (1969), pp. 70-90.
- 96 Sheets 4 and 6 of the manuscript of the *Trachtenbuch*, now in the Germanisches National Museum. The original sequence has been changed in the Dover publication (Christoph Weiditz, *Authentic Everyday Dress of the Renaissance* (New York, 1994).
- 97 '*Amici sequemur crucem, si enim fidem habuerimus, in hoc signo vincemus*'. See Hans-Jürgen Prien, 'La justificación de Hernán Cortés de su conquista de México', *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 22 (1996), pp. 11-31, at pp. 25-6. See also the banner of Saint George, in the Prayerbook of Maximilian. I thank Diana Fane for this information.
- 98 Andrea McKenzie Satterfield proposes that the jug could have been obtained 'on European soil', while the cross shield could be 'a commissioned piece' or 'a visual garnish from Weiditz': Andrea McKenzie Satterfield, 'The Assimilation of the Marvelous Other: Reading Christoph Weiditz's *Trachtenbuch* (1529) as an Ethnographic Document', MA thesis, University of South Florida, 2007 (p. 40, note 64 and p. 64, n. 109). The cross detail in the shield, has also been used to demonstrate that the Indian depicted did not come from Mexico: José Luis Casado Soto and Carlos Soler d'Hyver de los Deses in Christoph Weiditz, *The Costume Codex. Trachtenbuch* (Valencia, 2001); Satterfield, op. cit., (p. 10).
- 99 '... stylistically quite unlike any other such representations in Aztec art; and the butterfly mosaic seems to be dyed with several pigments unavailable before 1519 to Mexican craftsmen' (Christian Feest, 'Mexico and South America in the European *Wunderkammer*', in Impy and MacGregor, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 237-44, at p. 237).
- 100 Philippe Descola, *Par-delà Nature et Culture* (Paris, 2008). See also P. Descola (ed.), *La fabrique des images* (Paris, 2010).
- 101 In a German pamphlet published in Augsburg in 1523 (hence before the Nuremberg edition of Cortés's Second Letter), the author notes: 'They also make clothing out of feathers. They add to the garment; they make head, feet, and tail, and all the colours of the animal imitated, and do this so naturally and artistically that if someone looks at the wearer he is afraid and runs away because he thinks that it is the animal. The Chinese cannot transform human beings into animals but the Indians can.' *Ein Schöne Neue Zeytung so Kayserlich Mayestet aus India yest nemlich zukommen seind. Car uupsch vö den Newen Yseld und von yrem Sytten gar Kurtzweylyg zuleesen*, pamphlet published in quarto (Augsburg, 1523); Henry R. Wagner, 'Three accounts of the expedition of Fernando Cortes, printed in Germany between 1520 and 1522', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 9 (1929), pp. 176-212, at p. 209.
- 102 On the thirty-eight feather pieces sent by Cortés to the Moluccas, see *Relación de los gastos de Hernán Cortés en la armada al mando de Saavedra Cerón que se dirigió a las Molucas (c.1528)*, *Documentos Cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16), vol.1, doc. 88, pp. 491-503, at p. 494. On the pieces sent by Cortés to Pizarro, in Peru, see Martínez, op. cit. (note 22), pp. 702-3. The author quotes passages from López de Gómara, op. cit. (note 16), cap. cxviii, and Agustín de Zárate, *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú* (Antwerp, 1555), lib. iv, cap. ix on the 'ropa de martas' sent by Cortés and particularly appreciated by Pizarro.
- 103 The inscription of the Mass of St Gregory, kept today in the Musée des Jacobins in Auch specifies that the feather mosaic has been composed by Diego Huanitzin, under the guidance of Pedro de Gante, and was to be offered to Paul III. It has been often discussed in the literature as a counter-gift sent from Mexico to thank the Pope for his bull *Sublimis Dei* (1537) in which he had recognized the rationality of the Indians (see, in particular the pioneer reading of Elena Isabel Estrada de Gerlero, 'Una obra de plumaria en los talleres de San José de los Naturales', in *Arte y Coerción* (México, 1992), pp. 97-108). It seems not impossible, however, that Cortés could have participated in this commission. The haughtiness of this gesture – aimed to entice the Pope while short-circuiting both the newly arrived viceroy and the Emperor – could explain why the object would never arrive (or remain) in the Pope's hands. I am currently developing this hypothesis in an article deriving from a lecture: Alessandra Russo, 'Yxiptlatzin Sant Gregorio. La création d'une messe entre Mexico et Rome, 1539', *1500-1600. Entre Islam et Nouveaux Mondes. Les Réformes dans un contexte global*, Paris, INHA, 9 July 2010.
- 104 An inventory of the pieces sold is entitled 'Almoneda del Marqués del Valle' (published in *Documentos Cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16), vol. iv, doc. 306. Cortés had pawned the silver and gold pieces, as well as the brocades, to the Florentine Giacomo Boti, three months before his death. The pieces were redeemed in 1549 by the Count of Aguilar, his testamentary executor. See the inventory 'Piezas de plata y oro y camas de brocado empeñadas por Cortés y rescatadas por el conde de aguilar', published in *Documentos Cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16), vol. iv, doc. 302.
- 105 See Martínez in note 1 to the 'Almoneda del Marqués del Valle', op. cit. (note 104).
- 106 This is how an American bookseller's catalogue presents the work of Sacrobosco. *America Before 1700. Catalogue 271* see: <http://www.williamreese.com/catalogs/cat271.pdf>
- 107 'Inventario de los bienes de Hernando Cortés en la zona de Cuernavaca', in *Documentos Cortesianos*, op. cit. (note 16), vol. iv, doc. 303.
- 108 The effective production of silk and silk textiles began in the Spring of 1546: see Martínez, op. cit. (note 106) vol. iv, doc. 303, p. 369, introduction to the 'Inventario de los Bienes'.
- 109 'Inventario de los Bienes', op. cit. (note 107), p. 393.
- 110 'Maps (...) join history, literature, painting, architecture, and many other kinds of cultural endeavor to create a mutually reinforcing, albeit partially fictional, geography': Ricardo Padrón, *The Spacious World. Literature and Empire in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago, 2004), p. 21. Now we might also add inventories as being part of these 'fictional' geographies.